NEA Today
The Magazine of th
September 2001

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Increased NEA DUES-TAB Benefits
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Positive Development

Vicki Duff—and other educators nationwide—are leading innovations in professional development.

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NEA Today

Volume 20 • Number 1

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Positive Development

Tired of stuffy professional development courses run by folks who haven't been at a school site in years? Then check out how NEA members nationwide are redefining and reinvigorating what professional development can be for teachers and support professionals alike.

Cover photo by Leo Sorel

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Publisher
Kate Mattos

Editor
Bill Fischer

Manager, NEA Publications
Leona Hiraoka

Section Editors
Michelle Y. Green, Alain Jehlen, Dave Winans

Advertising Coordinator
Sherida McGhee

Publisher Center Manager
Lorraine Buckland Wilson

Production
Marsha Blackburn, Henry Brinkley, Deane Jenkins, Catherine Rawson

Contributing Writers
Dina Spector Gómez, Tom Nordby, David Sheridan, Matt Simon

Editorial Interns
Urmila Subramanyan, Erica Toliver

Art Direction
Kristina Goings Wickham & Associates, Inc.

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Harry Brennan, Old Bridge Education Association (New Jersey); Elizabeth Fourzan, Socorro Education Association (Texas); Don Mack, co-chair, Albany County Education Association (Wyoming); Bryan Massengale, Rhea-Dayton Education Association (Tennessee); Barbara Morris, co-chair, Colonial Paraprofessional Association (Delaware), Josef-Troi Orias, Hawaii State Teachers Association Student Program; John Sanchez, Corina Unified Education Association (California); Gail Swenson, Sioux Falls Education Association (South Dakota).

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By E-mail: neatoday@nea.org
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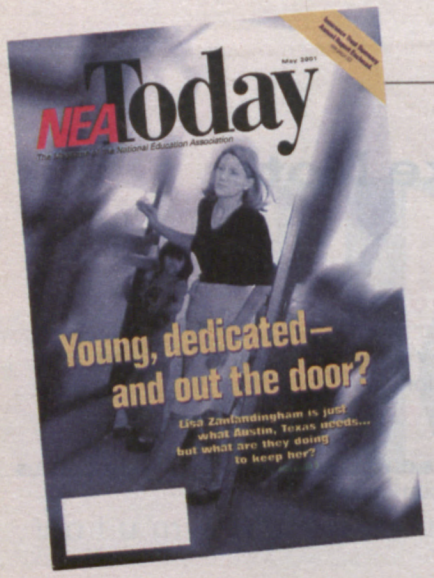
Letters


NEA Today
Young, dedicated—and out the door?
Lisa Vanlandingham is just what Austin, Texas needs... but what are they doing to keep her?

BALANCE LETTERS

When I read the letters in my May *NEA Today*, I looked again to make sure I wasn't reading the *Wall Street Journal*. I believe the majority of NEA members are old dyed-in-the-wool liberals like me. But the space given to members in the minority (like the number who voted for Mr. Bush) extolling the virtues of the current administration was appalling.

Give them space, but don't let it look like their views represent most of us who are long-time, dues paying members. Mr. Bush wants to do for the U.S. what he did for Texas.

Considering Texas was one of the most unlivable states in the country in a recent survey, that's frightening.

William Bennett
Lewes, Delaware

SECOND CAREER

Angela Denmore's position (Debate, May) that second-career new teachers should take methods courses before teaching motivated me to write. I agree totally that teachers benefit from peers. I disagree that methodology coursework should be a prerequisite for teaching. Taking coursework concurrent with a new class assignment can meet the needs for the classroom. New teachers must, however, also be in a supportive environment.

As teaching professionals, we must nurture new teachers. If it were not for occupancies created by first-career teachers who have left within the first five years, would there be as many positions for second-career teachers?

Cindy Pope
Flemington, New Jersey

After reading the articles on second-career teachers being required to take methods courses, I was offended. Monica Jenkins-Moore's words (Debate, May) slapped me in the face when she "looked down on individuals who become teachers by simply having a degree and passing PRAXIS exams." She felt non-education majors had taken "the express route."

I worked hard for my degree in history and English. The courses were tough and fulfilling. In opposition to those courses were the education ones I took to get my teaching certification. They were boring and in no way prepared me for the classroom.

Jodie Goebel
Punta Gorda, Florida

RUDE TO RACHEL

Reading about Ginny Kalish in "Born from Imagination" (May, 2001) and her imaginary student, Rachel, reminded me of the Rachels I've had in my classroom over the years and I wonder how a child named Rachel would react to reading about the obnoxious Rachel Rude Rowdy?

My guess is that a real Rachel would feel ridiculed and would be open to torment from peers. Perhaps a less common, non-biblical name could have served the same purpose for an imaginary student.

Martha Batchelder
Chatham, Massachusetts

TAKING OFFENSE

I find it disturbing that Nicole Andrews (Letters, May) believes Jesus and Marilyn Manson are "equally offensive." I hope her bias against Christianity is not as obvious to the students in her classes as it is in her letter.

I doubt that kids wearing shirts with the phrase "What would Jesus do?" have other motives than making people think about their actions and making good choices. It's unfortunate that having faith is now deemed so offensive to others.

Duane Bauer
Mondovi, Wisconsin

The letter from Peter Lucas in the May 2001 issue is astoundingly lacking in reason. In his letter, Mr. Lucas points out that some of the lowest paying states are the most educationally successful.

He continues by noting that some of those states are trying to increase educational funding. He considers this effort wrong. Mr. Lucas does not believe that increasing teachers' pay in those states can be beneficial.

That reasoning is incredibly inaccurate! By keeping the pay low, he is encouraging those teachers who are doing a fine job, according to Mr. Lucas, to look elsewhere for better pay.

If that happens and all the teachers doing such a good job are hired at other schools, what does he think would happen to those successful schools? I guess that rewarding the teachers who do a good job with better pay makes no sense to Mr. Lucas.

Mark Schaffer
Redfield, South Dakota

RETAINING TEACHERS

It's ironic that my May *NEA Today*, with its cover story on retaining teachers ("On Open Secret"), arrived the day I met with a career counselor. As a successful teacher with eight years' experience, I'm leaving not only because of gaps between salary and cost of living, but also because of my inability to work in an anti-education/anti-teacher environment of no retention policies, and weak or nonexistent consequences for student behavior.

I agree with the teacher cited in your article. I have friends who are duly compensated for their expertise and are on an upwardly mobile career path. And they don't have to endure the "teacher bashing" that is so common today.

Astrid Robitaille
Torrington, Connecticut

I'm principal of Kocurek Elementary in Austin, Texas, featured in your May edition. You quote a teacher saying teaching is "More tiring, more time-consuming, more stressful than I thought it would be. It's not just teaching, but putting up a bulletin board, giving a snack to a kid who didn't eat at home, breaking up a fight—all at the same time." Who among us hasn't been there?

The teacher's name is misspelled. It's Vanlandingham. You call Kocurek a "low-income school." We do have students from low-income families—31.1 percent, but nearly 70 percent come from middle-class homes.

It's becoming more difficult for young people to live on a teacher's salary, and support is crucial. The district and schools have mentoring plans. Are they perfect? No. Do we need more money? Absolutely! But the plans are in place, training is provided for mentors, and we are improving in efforts to provide support for new teachers.

Cathy Heath
Austin, Texas

I'm in my second year of teaching and 24 years old. I love my job, but looking into different professions has crossed my mind. I live where the average home price is $225,000. Day care averages $200 a week for one child. On a salary of $27,400, thoughts of buying a home and having children don't come often. Many college friends who, like me, majored in math, are in professions where they make triple my salary, and they're happy with their jobs. I know I'm not alone with these feelings and wish something could be done.

Kathleen Dussault
Newmarket, New Hampshire

When I read "An Open Secret," I felt compelled to thank you for writing this and to thank all mentors who assist beginning teachers!

I also have had positive support from fellow staff members, and it makes a huge difference. I have been teaching for 12+ years, and though teaching is my passion, there is still a part of me that is considering leaving. It isn't necessarily the pay, though that is a part of it.

Our school district has faced severe financial difficulties along with several other districts within the state of Oregon. As a result, several teachers have lost their jobs and class size has increased, while those who are left have been moved around from position to position as the district eliminates positions. Often the teachers aren't informed where or what they will be teaching until the last minute. Funding for basic supplies has dwindled to virtually nothing, leaving the teachers with no other choice but to buy them out of their own pockets. I love teaching, I wouldn't trade this for the world; however, it is becoming rather difficult to give our students what they need when we simply do not have the funding or the support to do so.

So why do good teachers leave? Because the profession is getting less and less support to meet the ever-growing demands that are placed on us. Give a good teacher the support he/she needs, and a good teacher will stay.

Julie Barrett
Welches, Oregon

I am writing in response to your May cover story. My first year of teaching, I had the mentor from hell. For some reason, she would go out of her way to give me incorrect information. For the past two years I have had a wonderful mentor. Every question and situation that arises, no matter how minor, my new mentor, Leslye Rosenbaum, helps.

Betsy LaFond
Royal Oak, Michigan

CLASSROOM AIDES

I am a teacher's assistant in a kindergarten class in Broward County, Florida. I find it odd that Karen O'Connell in Port St. Lucie should comment on the lack of aides/assistants in Florida (Letters, May). After all, aren't Coral Springs and Port St. Lucie both in the state of Florida? Every kindergarten class in my school with 25 or more students has a full-time aide.

In addition to this, most kindergarten classes have parent volunteers as well. I feel for my extended co-workers in Port St. Lucie and Kentucky. It is, indeed, a full-time job and should be part of the budget.

B.K. Parker
Boca Raton, Florida

ESTATE TAX

Betty Barr's letter (Letters, May) on estate tax repeal did nothing but parrot propaganda intended to confuse the issue. There are already ways to protect family businesses, including farms, from taxation. If existing laws are insufficient, they can be modified or augmented without giving huge windfalls to the rich.

We don't help the poor and weak out of altruism. We do it because it makes our society stronger. Nations that protect the rich and suppress the poor are generally considered backward and underdeveloped. If the rich don't pay their share, someone else must or we will all do without programs that make our nation a decent place to live.

F.A. Newsom
Clinton, Utah

Bette Barr writes, "The estate tax hits small businesses, especially family farms, the hardest." This is erroneous. As The *New York Times* points out, almost no working farmers pay the tax, according to an IRS analysis. The paper also reports: "One of the leading advocates for repeal of estate taxes, the American Farm Bureau Federation, said it could not cite a single example of a farm lost because of estate taxes."

Timothy Knapp
Syracuse, New York

Let's Talk

Share your ideas, comments, and opinions with *NEA Today* in one of five ways:

- By mail: Write to Letters, NEA Today, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036
- Through the Web: Go to www.nea.org/neatoday and click on "Submit a Letter to the Editor"
- By E-mail: Write to neatoday@nea.org
- By Fax: 202/822-7206
- By Phone: 202/822-7201

Letters are edited for length and clarity.

HOSTILE WORLD

Although gay and lesbian young people are the group most frequently victimized in schools, 75 percent of teachers have received no training on how to stop slurs and violence. One in three completed teen suicides is committed by a young person struggling to accept his or her sexual orientation in an often hostile world (Health and Fitness, "When Kids Don't Have a Straight Answer," March).

Teachers and youth organizations need to teach respect, not hatred and ostracism.

Valerie Johnson
Laguna Hills, California

Unlike Ellen Flury (Letters, April 2001), I applaud *NEA Today* for its excellent article in March, "When Kids Don't Have a Straight Answer." Regardless of Ms. Flury's religious beliefs, I'm sure we would agree that all children have a right to be safe at school.

I don't know of any religion that believes that children should be harassed, beaten up, and rejected. But this happens all too frequently to gay and lesbian teens or to straight students that may be perceived as gay or lesbian.

Regardless of religious beliefs, all teachers need to be sure that all children feel safe physically and emotionally at school in order for them to be able to learn and to mature into capable adults.

Lois Smallwood
Sunnyvale, California

EAT THOSE VEGGIES

How wonderful to see a page devoted to vegetarianism in the April *NEA Today*! As you stated, a vegetarian lifestyle has health advantages over a diet that includes meat. In addition, avoiding animal products is an environmentally, financially, and ethically sound practice.

Interested in including vegetarianism in lesson plans? An excellent curriculum for elementary students is available through Dr. Antonia Demas (antoniad8@yahoo.com) at the Food Studies Institute.

Susan Craig
Novato, California

Didn't anyone write expressing concern over "vegan" diets for young children? Don't you have a competent advisor who can warn you of dangers to children deprived of milk, meat, fish, eggs, and dairy products?

The "vegan educator" who was so delighted with the article "Beyond Broccoli" has already reached his adult growth, but a vegan diet is extreme, and is a danger to growing children.

Jere Hudson
Ashland, Oregon

President's Viewpoint

BY BOB CHASE

We Can Be Heroes

We're uniquely qualified to make low-performing schools a top priority.

It was fitting that our 2001 Representative Assembly was held in Los Angeles. After all, what Hollywood imagines, public schools actually do.

In movies, poor children go from rags to riches. Ordinary people achieve the impossible. And adults are always heroic—by the end of the film, they've rescued the children and saved the world.

Well, public schools enable poor children to go from rags to riches for real. They're filled with ordinary people doing extraordinary things. And they're staffed by adults who rescue children and save the world in little ways every single day.

Yet so many public school employees never receive any glory or recognition. For this reason, at this year's RA, we applauded the heroic work of seven NEA members.

We gave three cheers for David Bocchichio, a gym teacher in East Hartford, Connecticut who donated a kidney to the mother of three of his students. (Read more about David on page 40 of this issue.)

For Janis Eggert, a school bus driver in Lebanon, Oregon, who helped organize a crucial bond campaign that saved her district schools from collapse.

For Marian Galbraith, a middle school teacher in Groton, Connecticut whose after-school programs help young African-American men succeed.

At the dawn of a new school year, I believe we must harness this potential—and exercise it collectively on behalf of low-performing schools.

For Thomas Ibarra of Los Angeles, California, who bravely stepped forward to become one of the first teachers to join an ACLU lawsuit against school funding inequities.

For teachers Sandra Roberts and David Smith, who created the Holocaust Paper Clip Project to teach middle school students in Whitwell, Tennessee about the importance of tolerance.

And for Rhonda Simmons, a guidance counselor in Las Vegas, Nevada whose dance program for inner-city children inspires them to stay in school.

Yet while each and every one of these members is extraordinary, they are not atypical. Of the NEA's 2.6 million members, there's not a soul among us who doesn't know their own David, Sandra, or Marian. In fact, there are untold numbers who have done similar deeds themselves.

As educators, heroism is endemic to our work. Every day, when we walk through that school door, we have the potential to act heroically. And, at the dawn of a new school year, I believe we must harness this potential—and exercise it collectively on behalf of low-performing schools.

Granted, making low-performing schools our Association's top priority will not be easy. It is perhaps the toughest job we will ever face. The problems that plague poor schools are immensely complicated. We cannot give poor children brand new childhoods or neighborhoods. Nor can we work miracles by ourselves.

However, I know the power of our members. I've seen you staying after class to help students with long division … I've seen you comforting a feverish child whose parent can't pick her up from school … I've seen you coaching the track team and cleaning the auditoriums. I know that our members are a legion of Thomas Ibarras, Rhonda Simmons, and Janice Eggerts.

Nothing gives me more faith than knowing that you are the stewards of future generations. You are my heroes. So this coming year, let us make it our goal to act heroically together—for the sake of those children and schools that need help the most.

Comments? E-mail Bob Chase at BobChase@nea.org.

Kay Lauren Miller made sure that needy children had books.

That's why she's a Prudential Spirit of Community Award National Honoree

Kay Lauren Miller, 17, of Vienna, Virginia, knows how important it is for children to read. Having overcome her own dyslexia, Kay wanted to make sure that books would be available to all children, especially those who could not afford to buy them. To meet this need, Kay founded "Reach Out and Read" (ROAR), an organization of student volunteers who collect and distribute books to shelters, hospitals, and daycare centers. That is why Kay is a 2001 Prudential Spirit of Community Award National Honoree.

"Reading is the basis of knowledge, and I wanted to make sure that needy children had books to read."

Kay Lauren Miller
2001 Prudential Spirit of Community Award National Honoree

Do you know a young person who deserves recognition? Prudential created the Spirit of Community Awards in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals to honor young people like Kay in every middle and high school for outstanding community service. And right now, we're looking for candidates for the year 2002. If you know a young person who's made a difference in the community, we want to hear about it.

Awards are given at the local, state and national levels. Principals in every middle and high school in America will be receiving information and applications from NASSP in September. Local honorees are selected in November and become candidates for statewide honors, a $1,000 prize and a trip to Washington, D.C. At a special ceremony in the nation's capital, ten national honorees will each receive a $5,000 award, a gold medallion and a crystal trophy.

Help us find next year's honorees! Encourage your volunteer-minded students to apply. The application deadline is October 31, 2001. For more information, call NASSP at **1-800-253-7746, ext. 324.**

National Association of Secondary School PRINCIPALS

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Twenty-Nine Years and Counting

As she begins her final year of teaching, middle school teacher Pat Coles looks back on her career.

BY PAT (KASPAR) COLES

I wonder how can I retire from the stimulating din of Newton Middle School's hallway gossip? How can I exist without the daily observations of children bouncing off locker walls, as they careen down our 1962 hallways? Will my hearing return, after I no longer hear the repetitive chant of my name 83 times a day: 'Mrs. Coles …'"

"My dad's printer needs a new cartridge, so I couldn't finish that project you assigned five weeks ago."

"I never received that assignment, I think I was absent that day."

"It's in Mom's car and I'm at Dad's house this week."

"I left my mockingbird study guide in Oklahoma. Grandma is mailing it."

It all started that day I was asked to help the kindergarten teacher at Edward Rosewater School, located in South Omaha. My seventh grade teacher had noted that I was finishing my work quickly each day, so I was to be rewarded by going to the kindergarten room to assist that teacher.

David Zalubowski

I was hooked from the beginning. Right up my 12-year-old spine went the teaching shiver of bonding with this funny little kid, so eager and sweet. He earnestly lisped his way through a poem about a cow! He was superb.

If that wasn't enough, I was the center of the students' attention as I read to them, and I realized fairly quickly that this was my idea of fun.

It was not so much the power one had leading these little people. It was the connecting with a precious open mind, trusting my words, my instructions.

This was not only an educational place, but a nurturing place, one where I could create a meaningful experience for little humans. The thrill of it all cast its mold. No doubt, I would become a teacher.

Some 29 years after my experiences in that small kindergarten classroom and hundreds of kids later, I anticipate my last year of teaching. It will be spent creating a safe, respectful room for my eighth graders.

Not a day passes that I, along with my three teammates, don't find something to laugh about, humor being the teachers' ultimate elixir.

Our eighth graders this past year were pleasant and helpful. They were concerned about homework overload, so I suggested they write to the *Denver Post*.

We read several articles about the purpose of homework. It was decided during class discussions that homework was necessary, here to stay, and time management was a goal for all. The *Post* published five of the students' letters.

Middle school students, as well as the parents of middle school children, are often burdened with too much work and too little time. The middle school student is neither child nor adult, which is why a teacher anchor is important.

This is what makes the true middle school teacher stick around. Nothing annoys me more than when an outsider says, "You teach what! Middle school, well someone has to do it." It is not a burden for us. It is what we want to do.

Recently, I heard one of my colleagues, Phyllis, speak to our teachers. She is retiring after 33 years in this school, always a bright energy in our building. She has led orchestras, language arts classes, task forces, and obtained two master's degrees.

It is unique people like Phyllis and my team who make this an honorable profession. We, as teachers, spend years not only educating students, but in a way unfolding human beings.

I am proud to see how some of the human beings I have taught have unfolded. Every once in a while, they walk into my room, these beings, sometimes years later, the finished product standing there and grinning, wondering if I will remember them. Sometimes I do. I see familiar eyes, mouth, and body language of someone I knew.

I've enjoyed teaching—being in the trenches, I call it. I've enjoyed the trenches of Omaha District 6; Craig, Colorado; McLean, Virginia; the District of Columbia; and Littleton, Colorado schools. I have learned from the children of suburbia and the inner city.

I have learned many things in my classroom, but perhaps the most important thing I learned is that some people can have a job they enjoy all their life.

I was one of those lucky ones. I have spent 29 years in a very warm place—the American classroom.

When we stand in front of our students, I hope we remember teaching is a gift for students and us. Send them home with the love of poetry, history of America, the latest equation, the balance and beauty of the chemical table, and certainly with hope, self-respect, and worth. Everyone deserves a warm, safe place. ✔

"The middle school student is neither child nor adult, which is why a teacher anchor is important," writes Coles.

Pat Coles shares life with family and husband David, who completed his 32-year teaching career at Arapahoe High School in Littleton, Colorado. Her E-mail address is pcoles@lps.k12.co.us.

As we begin a new publishing year, I'd like to mention some of the topics we anticipate covering this year.

Our October cover story looks at the links between low student performance and low-income schools and what can be done to lift these schools to higher achievement levels. Our story focuses on two school districts in Raleigh, North Carolina and LaCrosse, Wisconsin that are busing low-income kids to high-income schools and high-income kids to low-income schools in an effort to equalize educational opportunity for all students. Our story shows the progress that's been made—and the problems they've faced.

Bill Fischer
Editor

In November, we'll take a fresh look at parental involvement. Not surprisingly, there's a direct connection between parent involvement and student achievement. This story recounts some of the successful strategies employed by NEA members to increase parent involvement. Our cover story ties in with NEA's parent involvement ad campaign in conjunction with the Ad Council which will precede American Education Week.

We've already begun the research for our cover stories for the January issue and beyond. These include major feature stories about reading (tied in with NEA's Read Across America), special education, testing and accountability, and how the teaching profession has changed and where it's headed.

These, of course, are just the featured topics for the issues ahead. There's lots more to look forward to in other sections of *NEA Today*. Among the debate questions, for example is this one in next month's issue: Should staff that teach in tougher schools get higher pay?

And we'll be running some of your responses to these dilemmas: How do you rein in a class that's gotten out of control? And, what do you do when students tell you their personal problems?

Bill Fischer

Positive

Looking for professional development created by folks who know what's really going on in schools? Check out these innovative programs involving NEA members across the country.

As a member of New Jersey's Teaching Standards Board, teacher Cheryl Johnson directly impacts professional development for educators statewide.

Photos by Leo Sorel

Leading the State Board

New Jersey's Professional Teaching Standards Board plays a central role in developing continuing education programs for teaching staff, and it doesn't play this role from on high.

That's because 10 of the 19 board members are teachers, and they're well grounded on the needs of real educators.

"This is a new vision for professional development," says board member Cheryl Johnson, a speech and language specialist at Roosevelt School Number 7 in Garfield. "I've been teaching for 22 years, and this is the first time I've had a true say in how I can improve my own skills to improve student performance—and help other teachers do the same."

"I feel this is the most important thing I've ever done," says board member Sue Heinis, a librarian at West Essex Senior High School in North Caldwell. "If I had to give up everything else I'm doing, I'd keep serving on this board."

Heinis adds that her enthusiasm is based in part on the board's swift progress.

"In the two years since the board was created, we've not only agreed on professional development standards, but we've tailored those standards to meet what teachers say is their most urgent priority: helping students to master the state core curriculum content standards," Heinis notes.

These state standards require all students to master uniform subject areas, and, says Johnson, teachers are particularly concerned about improving their own knowledge of the core curriculum.

"What the Teaching Standards Board learned by surveying teachers and listening to its own teacher members is that we want to align our own content knowledge with the content standards," says Johnson. "In the past, our concerns might have gone unheeded. But now we have a place at the table, and the other board members listened to us."

"We're trying to work differently, collaborating with administrators, parents, and others to solve student problems," says Vicki Duff, a teacher at East Dover Elementary School in Toms River and chair of the Teaching Standards Board. "So far, we're succeeding beyond everyone's expectations. We've not only helped shape development standards, but we've expanded the realm of how teachers can meet them—such as through study groups, mentoring, and peer counseling, rather than through an exclusive regimen of coursework."

The board was created in part by former New Jersey School Superintendent Leo Klagholz, who'd long heard teachers complain of being left out of the professional development loop. To ensure that the board gave teachers a real voice, he worked closely with the New Jersey Education Association.

The new standards set by the board call on teachers to participate in 100 clock hours of professional development every five years. The plan is being implemented across the state by smaller boards—on which teachers are also heavily represented—at the county and school district levels. ✔

—Matt Simon

Teacher Vicki Duff, chair of New Jersey's Professional Teaching Standards Board, looks beyond traditional coursework as she searches for creative ways that educators can meet professional development standards.

Development

Paraprofessional Crystal Hearvey now feels more a part of "the overall education picture."

Darren Hauck

Academy for Support Professionals

When the Wisconsin Education Association Council created its Professional Development Academy in 1992, school secretary Joyce Jones continually stressed the need to include ESPs in the professional development certificate programs.

She succeeded, and today some 5,000 education support professionals have already completed the program. Courses—suggested by members themselves—cover areas such as effective communication, nonviolent crisis intervention, and legal rights and responsibilities.

"We need many of the same skills as teachers," says Jones, who served on the academy's original board. "The bus driver is down the street, the teacher's aide is on the playground, but they're both with the kids, and how they react to a situation can affect a child as much as a teacher's reaction. Professional development is a must for all school employees."

"I would recommend this program to all ESPs," says recent participant Crystal Hearvey, a paraprofessional at Townsend Street School in Milwaukee. "Every day in the classroom, ESPs face situations with students that, at one time, only teachers were trained to deal with. The program has not only made me feel more confident in those situations, but it's unifying ESPs—making us feel more like we're part of the overall education picture."

The program has received accolades from Wisconsin's school districts, two of which are now offering pay incentives to ESPs who have earned the certificate.

"It's done a lot to make us feel like professionals," says Hearvey. "Anywhere you go in the state, you know that your training will be looked on as something of value by a school."

"ESPs have traditionally been underserved—left out of too many programs open to teachers," says WEAC staffer Debra Berndt, the program's director. "To be part of something that recognizes their importance is wonderful. And it's been a union success story in quality professional growth." ✔

—M.S.

> **"Anywhere you go in the state, you know that your training will be looked on as something of value."**
>
> —Crystal Hearvey, ESP certificate program graduate

At the Top of Her Game

When you're at the top of your game, what motivates you to stay there? For veteran teacher Michelle Covarrubias, it was National Board Certification.

"I've been training others for years," says Covarrubias, an ESL teacher in an inner-city school district in South Phoenix, Arizona, "but there was no growth for me. With no money in the district to send me anywhere, I wondered, 'What's pushing me to stay on top?'"

Covarrubias found out about National Board Certification when the Arizona Education Association held an informational meeting. She learned about the Exemplary Teacher's Cadre—a joint initiative of AEA, Arizona State University, and the Bank of America that provides stipends and technical support to teachers who want to pursue the process.

"It's taking a deep look at your teaching, reflecting about what is good, and adjusting what you're doing to make sure you're meeting national teaching standards effectively," says Covarrubias.

Simply put, National Board Certification seeks to define what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do to maximize student learning. Candidates participate in a rigorous, standards-based performance assessment that takes up to seven months and 400 hours to complete and costs $2,300. Yet it's an idea Covarrubias hopes will take off in poor districts such as her own.

"Teachers in poor districts often feel devalued," she says. "Certification affirms: 'Here we are, and we're good at what we do.'"

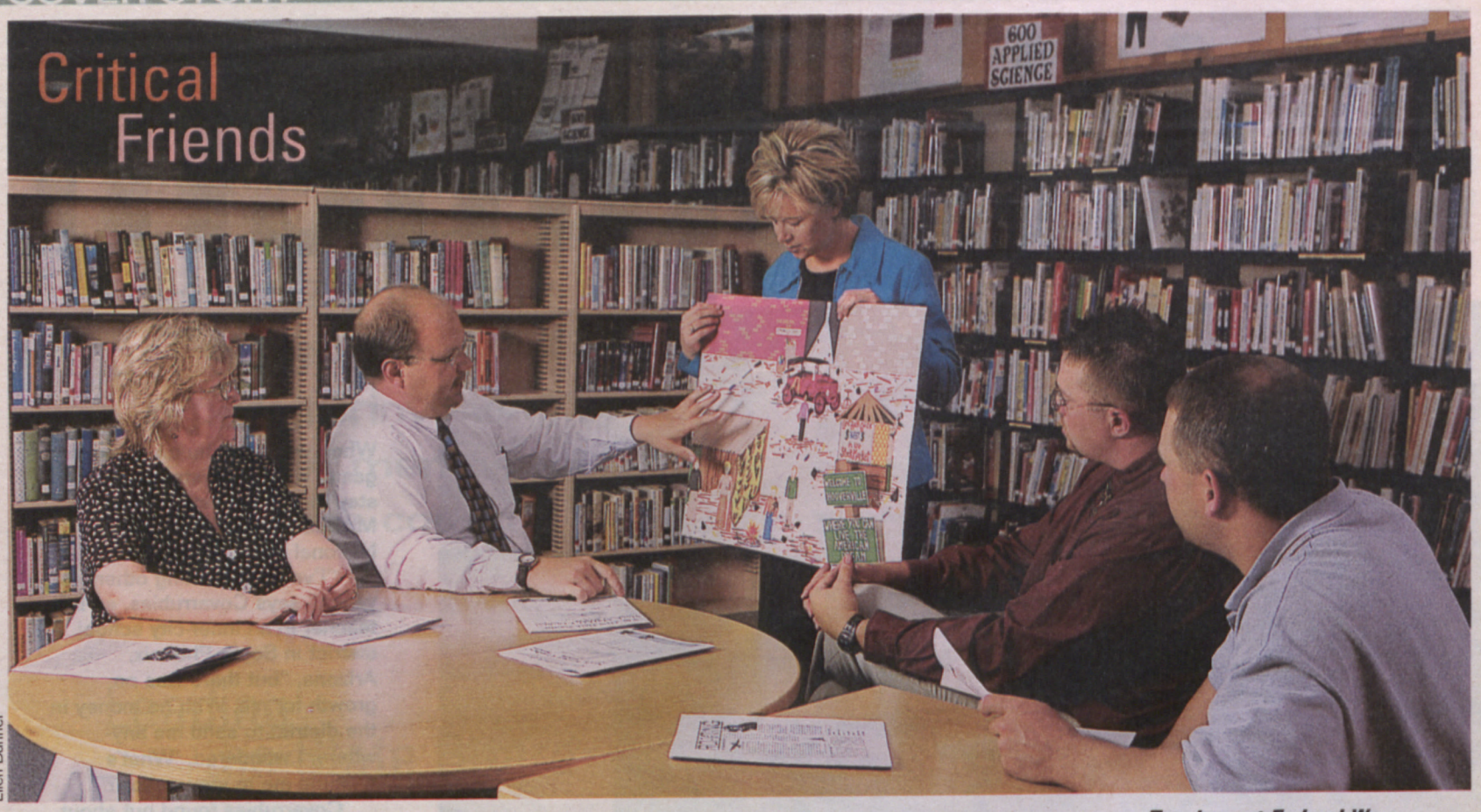
Covarrubias says National Board Certification invigorated her teaching and drew her to the Association. As a result, she plans to run for district office and network more at the state level.

"It gave me the boost I needed to keep going professionally."

—Michelle Y. Green

For more: E-mail Covarrubias at Azcovarrubias1@cs.com

Critical Friends



Ellen Banner

Teachers at Federal Way High School gather for a formal "critical friends" session to refine specific teaching skills.

It started as the "Teachers' Club"—15 people talking about classroom issues over dinner.

Though it was fun, members felt dissatisfied. "It was easy to talk about all the problems and never get anywhere," says history teacher Karin Weberg. "We had great camaraderie, but it wasn't very focused."

Three years later, that club has honed its focus on professional development. It's grown into formal "critical friends" groups, a highly successful professional development program that involves all but a handful of the 70 faculty members at Federal Way High School, located in a middle-income community halfway between Seattle and Tacoma, Washington.

These groups follow detailed, timed discussion rules as they consider problems brought in by their members. Discussions are kept on target, and members are helped to feel safe in exposing weak aspects of their professional work. Each group of about 12 has members with a mix of subject areas and years of experience.

Social studies teacher Andy Cameron asked his group to help him make a unit on the Cuban Missile Crisis more effective. A Spanish teacher suggested having students draft letters asking their parents to stay out of their rooms, and then compare their approach with Kennedy's letter to Khrushchev trying to get him to take nuclear missiles out of Cuba.

Weberg asked for—and got—help in putting more life and excitement into a new curriculum she designed about minorities in America.

"You come away with a lot of ideas, and you can always take them or leave them," she says.

The groups meet on professional development days on which the students stay home. That required a waiver of the state attendance law, which the school board requested after an intensive outreach campaign by faculty to persuade parents that students would benefit. No one is forced to take part in a group.

Weberg feels these groups represent an important advance in professional development. "We're not talking about all the dilemmas in the educational system," she says. "We focus on the most important thing—student work in a classroom. It's not an outside, prescribed workshop that may or may not be useful. It's us as teachers taking control of reforming school." ✔

—Alain Jehlen

FACTS ON . . .

Teacher Preparation

- The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), a coalition of 33 groups that includes NEA, works to establish high-quality teacher preparation. NCATE is the body that grants professional accreditation to schools, colleges, and departments of education. More than 500 of the country's teacher colleges and universities have received NCATE accreditation.
- The three states that required NCATE accreditation for all schools of education during the 1980s—Arkansas, North Carolina, and West Virginia—experienced greater than average increases in student achievement during the 1990s, based on reading and math test scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress.
- In recent years, more than 50,000 people annually who lacked the preparation required for their former jobs entered teaching on emergency or substandard licenses.
- Studies show that fully prepared teachers—those who have an in-depth knowledge of content and know how to guide individual student learning, plan productive lessons, and diagnose student problems—produce higher achieving students.
- A 1997 University of Texas study found that 75 percent of third graders passed all parts of the state assessment when taught by fully licensed teachers in the field. Only 63 percent passed when fewer than 85 percent of the third grade teachers were licensed.

For more information on...

- The New Jersey State Professional Teaching Standards Board, log on to www.state.nj.us/njded/profdev/ptsb.htm. And visit the New Jersey Education Association's site at www.njea.org/ProfessionalDevelopment/standardBoard.asp.
- The Wisconsin Education Association Council's Professional Development Academy, contact Debra Berndt at berndtd@weac.org.
- National Board Certification, visit www.nbpts.org.
- Critical Friends Groups, visit the Coalition of Essential Schools Northwest Center site at www.cesnorthwest.org/critical_friends_groups.htm. You can reach Karin Weberg at kweberg@fwsd.wednet.edu and Andy Cameron at acameron@fwsd.wednet.edu.
- Ideas on how to start a successful mentoring program, check out *Peer Support: Teachers Mentoring Teachers* from the NEA Professional Library. Order online at www.nea.org/books.

Should we raise the bar for admission to teacher prep programs?

MICHAEL THOMAS ***heads the North Dakota Education Association Student Program and is studying for his master's at the University of North Dakota. He was working in cryptology on a Navy submarine when an off-duty activity, Special Olympics, got him hooked on teaching.***

yes

I think we do need to raise the bar for admission.

Currently, we are in quite a dilemma. We are experiencing a teacher shortage, and with the number of teachers looking toward retirement, it may only get worse.

Because of the shortage, school districts are hiring teachers who aren't necessarily qualified to teach, just to fill positions.

This hurts children. Children do not deserve a second-rate education simply because a school district couldn't find a qualified teacher.

Districts that hire unqualified teachers also contribute to the lack of respect for public schools.

Raising the bar for admission isn't a short-term solution for the teaching shortage. But it would send a message to the public indicating that education in America is a top priority. And that message would attract more capable people to teaching.

And that, in turn, could help address a major problem facing the teaching profession: low salaries. By raising the bar for admission, and consequently sending more qualified people into the classroom, we could make even stronger arguments for raising teacher salaries.

The effect would be cyclical—higher salaries would attract more people to teaching. More people would meet the higher bar we've set. That, in the long term, would address the teacher shortage—while ensuring that children get a first-rate education.

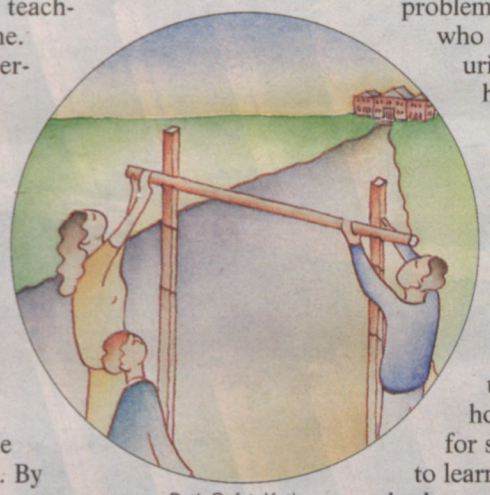
Many college students are obtaining education degrees but then going into other professions. These are students who did not really know what they wanted to do, so they chose teaching. They soon found out that they did not truly enjoy teaching and moved on. These students make a mockery out of teaching.

For example, many athletes choose teaching as their major as a cushion in case they don't make it to the next level in their sports. This way, they can still coach.

If they truly want to coach, that's great. Our kids need good role models, and inspirational coaches are good role models. But if they major in teaching because they don't know what else to do, and have no intention of ever using that degree, they're giving teachers a bad name.

At the university I attend, the minimum GPA for admission into the teaching program is a 2.5. Most athletes need this GPA level to remain eligible to play sports. By raising the bar, we could weed out some of these students and solidify the quality of teachers in America.

I believe that those who truly want to teach, will teach, despite low salaries and despite any requirements for acceptance into teaching programs. By raising the bar, we would simply rid our profession of students who do not have the intense desire to teach, and give our children the quality teachers they deserve. ✔



Ruth Sofair Ketler

BARBARA S. HAWK ***has worked in teaching, educational research, and curriculum development. An elementary school teacher for 14 years, Hawk is currently on medical leave from Hohokam Middle School in Tucson, Arizona.***

no

We need a wide range of people in teaching. We need high achievers and people who needed special education services as children. We need late bloomers who messed around in high school and found their purpose later. They may not all be good test takers or have the savvy to work the system for good grades.

What we need most are people who love learning, who think kids are interesting, who like to problem solve, and who think that figuring out how to help a child over a hurdle is a good way to spend your spare time for a week or so.

We need people who understand how hard it is for some students to learn. Many of us who learned to read easily and behaved well get frustrated when students can't grasp reading for the longest time, or act like hot-air balloons floating around our rooms, never sitting still.

Some of my students who were the most savvy about helping me teach, and who wanted to become teachers themselves, struggled with learning. I never said, "Well, you'll have to get good grades." I did say, "When you get ready to go to college, come find me and I will help you any way I can."

Think what A, a student of mine who did not really read until eighth grade, could contribute to our work with late bloomers. She wants to teach primary grades.

Fifteen minutes into the first day of school, M was "cleaning my desk," which had nothing in it. Think how he could help ADHD boys. I wish he wanted to teach.

Recently, I worked with a student teacher from a private college. Despite recent successes, she had been turned down by the teacher prep program at our state university due to a low GPA caused by her poor showing as a freshman and sophomore ten years earlier.

A few students challenged her. I had found the same students very hard to handle, and so had other experienced teachers.

But she found ways to motivate these students, and she did it by drawing on her own experiences from that earlier time when she, like them, didn't care much for school. When these students were learning to write mysteries, she wrote one, too, and she took the risk of inviting them into her writing process every step along the way.

I have a somewhat checkered social past. When parents learn that I understand divorce, remarriage, step-parenting, and long-term live-in relationships, we are better able to deal openly with factors affecting their child's learning.

We don't need to raise the bar for prospective teachers. We do need to help new teachers survive and thrive in their first few years. If someone wants to teach and is willing to work at learning how, I say let them in and give them all the support we can.

We have all kinds of kids. We need all kinds of teachers. ✔

What's Your Opinion?

Should we raise the bar for admission to teacher prep programs?
To vote, visit our Web site at www.nea.org/neatoday and see the results instantly.

Should second-career new teachers be required to take methods courses before starting work?
The tally from last May's debate:
54% Yes **46% No**

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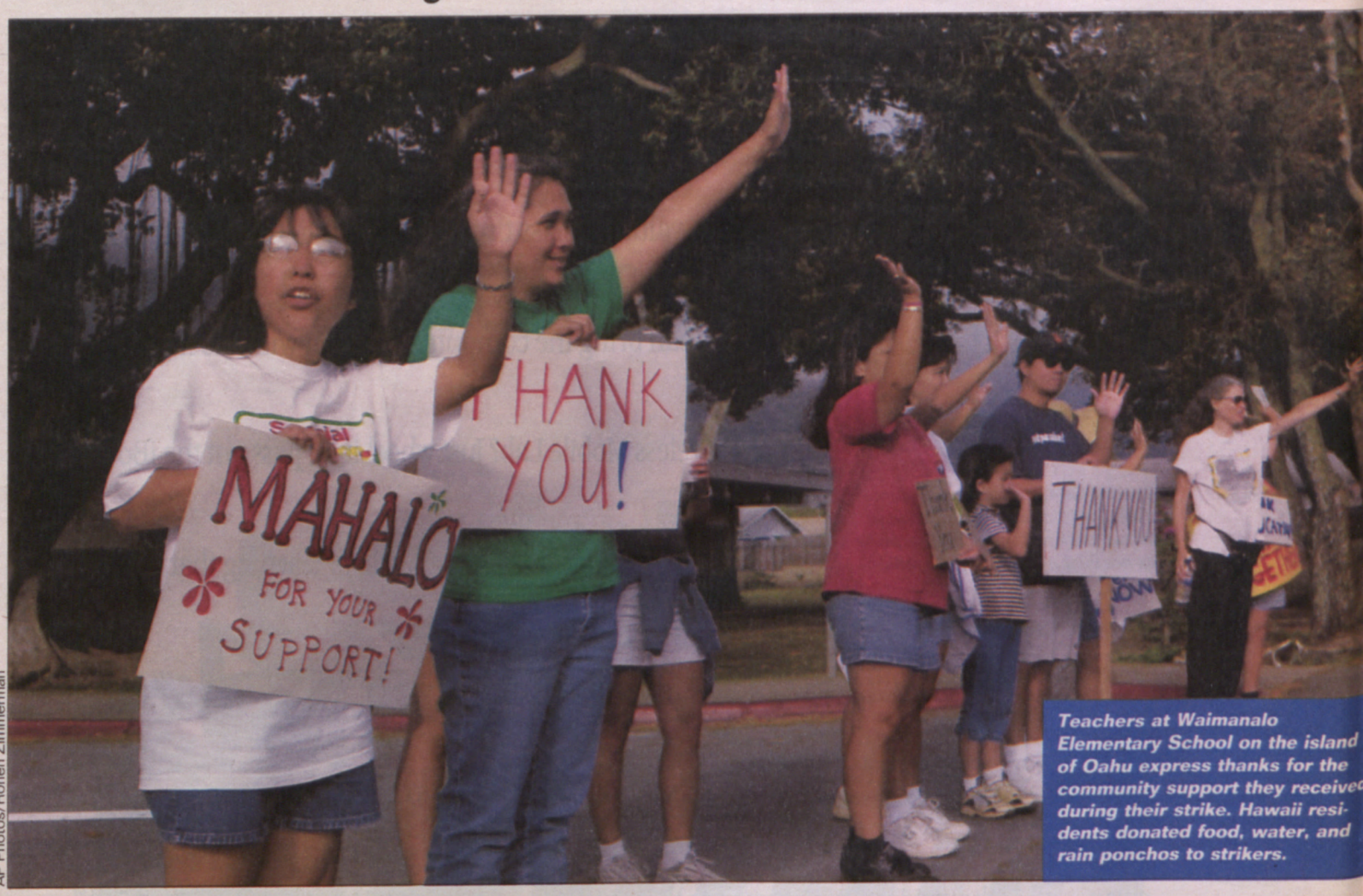
'We Really Amazed Ourselves'



AP Photos/Ronen Zimmerman

Teachers at Waimanalo Elementary School on the island of Oahu express thanks for the community support they received during their strike. Hawaii residents donated food, water, and rain ponchos to strikers.

Backed by everyone from parents to politicians, Hawaii NEA members wage an historic 20-day strike to boost their pay—and their profession.

Hawaii's not much of a paradise for an underpaid public school teacher who has to shell out three bucks for a gallon of milk or $1,200 a month for a decent one-bedroom apartment.

But the islands' small-town atmosphere, born of strong social relationships and tight family links, can make the 50th State something of a safe haven when educators face a crisis.

That's what the 13,000 members of the Hawaii State Teachers Association found out last spring when they waged an historic strike to put "a qualified teacher in every classroom." They were buttressed by an extensive support matrix of school parents, neighbors, business owners, trade unionists, and even state and federal lawmakers.

That 20-day work stoppage, which coincided with a 13-day strike by the 3,100-member University of Hawaii Professional Assembly/NEA, briefly shut down the islands' *entire* K-graduate public education system and grabbed media attention across the country.

HSTA members succeeded in bargaining a new four-year, $125 million contract with the Hawaii Department of Education, which runs a single statewide school district.

This groundbreaking agreement addresses issues central to educational quality, from money for teacher recruitment and retention to support for new and struggling teachers.

The spring bargaining offensive, says HSTA President Karen Ginoza, was just the latest in a series of "risks this Association has taken to set the agenda for the teaching profession."

The list of risks extends from joint work with state officials on development of teacher standards, state tests, and school report cards to successful grassroots HSTA campaigns to include special education students in official class counts and to bring down K-1 class sizes.

HSTA's "futuristic agenda" includes

The New Hawaii Contract in Brief

The new contract bargained last spring by the Hawaii State Teachers Association boosts the salaries of teachers, librarians, counselors, and registrars by 19.5 percent over four years. It also reinstitutes annual increments, boosts the salary range to $35,373-$64,202, and provides a 3 percent differential for teachers with a master's or professional diploma and a 6 percent differential for those with a doctorate.

The agreement also halves the credits needed, to 15, to move into a new salary classification and creates a large pay differential for National Board Certification—$5,000 for each of the 10 years the certification is in effect, along with a total $2,500 stipend for out-of-pocket Board costs.

The Hawaii pact addresses teacher quality by creating the nation's fastest fair dismissal procedure. And it tackles professional needs by converting four instructional days to professional development days and establishing a peer assistance program for new and struggling teachers.

One very welcome boost for new teachers is the contract's reimbursement—up to $800 annually for every educator—for classroom supplies. "This dramatically helps first-year people who arrive in bare classrooms, with no books, no nothing," says Kimberlee Greer, a third-year teacher at Maunawili Elementary on Oahu. ✔

Jean Noguchi, a teacher at Waimanalo Elementary School, holds the morning paper announcing the end of the strike.

recruitment and retention of qualified teachers in the face of strong competition from the mainland, Ginoza adds. "Our newly bargained compensation package is just another piece of a larger campaign for quality."

In the build-up period before the April walkout, building-level Association reps conducted a survey of unfilled teaching positions and unlicensed teachers who work with nothing more than a high school diploma. HSTA then carried the survey's findings—amounting to a total of 69 empty classrooms—to meetings across the state of community residents, business people, and union leaders.

State residents connected with HSTA's announced goal of a "qualified teacher in every classroom," and questioned Governor Benjamin Cayetano's 9 percent salary offer to educators—at a time when island living costs were 33 percent above those on the mainland.

HSTA's intensive planning carried over to the strike itself, which kept 99 percent of Hawaii's teachers off the job for 20 days and actually saw the number of picket line crossers *decrease* as the stoppage wore on.

"HSTA did a great job of preparing people, right down to getting a 99 percent strike authorization vote before the walkout. We really amazed ourselves," says Russ Woolsey, a registrar at Wainanae High School and a veteran of HSTA's last strike, in 1973.

"Our newly bargained compensation package is [part] of a larger campaign for quality."

—HSTA President Karen Ginoza

"Morale stayed up, and not one of the 140 staffers at my school crossed the line," Woolsey stresses. "In fact, people from our crew would drive to nearby elementary schools to picket each morning."

Also helping make the Hawaii strike a success was the enthusiastic participation of many probationary teachers, like Kimberlee Greer, a special/regular ed teacher at Maunawili Elementary.

"Nobody crossed the line at my school," reports Greer, who served as head picket captain. "We met with people thinking about crossing and said we would support them in all aspects, be it through helping with child care or donating money, as long as they didn't cross the line."

Greer, then a second-year teacher, felt she was fighting for professional *respect*.

Greer was particularly incensed that the state was enticing mainland special ed teachers to the islands with a $100,000 recruitment package, while paying her, a lifelong state resident, just $29,000 before taxes. "I said, '*Hey*, what are you doing to keep me in Hawaii?'" she recalls.

The collective commitment to professionalism—and to equity—welded Greer and her colleagues together. "We were so cohesive," Greer concludes, "that now, after the strike, we like each other more than ever!"

Beyond unity between new and veteran teachers, what *really* made this strike succeed was community support. It's impossible to sum up the enormous backing given HSTA strikers, but special thanks go to:

■ **Hawaii's average residents.** Countless bystanders donated food, water, or rain ponchos to the striking teachers.

Incredibly, strangers would often just stop their cars, bring food to the lines, jump back in their cars, and disappear. A chiropractor donated thousands of bottles of water, and ranchers slaughtered cattle and shipped ground meat to the teachers.

■ **Parents of children in schools.** Kimberlee Greer and other picketers at Maunawili Elementary were stunned when parents, with their kids, appeared one day at lunchtime to relieve picketers on the line.

"The support was definitely there," says Russ Woolsey. "Low-income parents in our community see the schools as a place for kids to get better, and they understood HSTA's bargaining issues."

■ **Union members.** Both before and during the HSTA strike, island teachers received support from the Hawaii state AFL-CIO and its affiliated unions.

Members of other unions joined the picket lines, helped HSTA members lobby and rally in Honolulu, and donated tons of food and water to strikers. Honolulu bus drivers displayed HSTA signs and pamphlets in their buses, and members of one construction union honored the picket line, stopped campus construction work, and reported to the unemployment office.

■ **Political leaders.** HSTA members knew they had a winning cause when many politicians, dismayed with the governor's hardline bargaining stance, walked the picket lines, donated food to strikers, and pressured the governor to settle. Walking the lines were such notables as U.S. Senator Patsy Mink, Hawaii Lieutenant Governor Mazie Hirono, and Honolulu Mayor Jeremy Harris.

It was a strike for the history books. ✔

Hawaii Update

At press time in July, the State of Hawaii had decided not to ratify the contract it signed with the Hawaii State Teachers Association—focusing objections on the pact's 3 percent differential for teachers with a master's or professional diploma.

For news on HSTA's battle to implement the contract, go to www.hsta.org.

YOUR DUES DID IT

Hawaii State Teachers Association members didn't fight their contract battle alone. NEA and its state affiliates pitched in by providing:

■ **Direct financial contributions.**

■ **Extra staff for strike organization.** HSTA reps were backed up by some 11 NEA staffers and more than 45 out-of-state UniServ staffers—thanks to NEA's interstate shared staffing program designed for "unique organizational or programmatic difficulties."

■ **A secure Web site for picket and welfare captains.** Among other things, this NEA-created site—maintained by a cadre of HSTA members—offered quick, consistent bargaining updates and made possible a swift contract ratification process.

■ **Moral support.** Be it through a Hawaii strike rally speech by NEA President Bob Chase or supportive E-mails from colleagues across the U.S., HSTA members realized that they're part of a larger Association *family*.

Heroes & Zeroes

▲ In early May, thousands of Washington Education Association members in seven Puget Sound districts walked off the job to protest legislators' failure to adequately fund public education—including voter-passed initiatives to pay for educator cost-of-living increases, smaller class sizes, and professional development. Media reports indicated strong parental support for school employees on the day of the first walkout.

WEA

▼ In Virginia, the governor and legislators have failed to agree to off-year amendments to the biennial budget to meet the pressing needs of public schools.

"At a time when the public identifies improving public education as a priority, we will see a decline in support for education of seven dollars per pupil," points out Virginia Education Association President Jean Bankos. "Education was clearly not a priority when the General Assembly left town, work unfinished."

▲ The Oregon Education Association has given its Education Citizen of the Year Award to Governor John A. Kitzhaber for his "unwavering commitment" to public education. "The governor has shown us that he believes the health of our state ultimately depends on the learning opportunities we afford our children and young adults," says OEA President James Sager.

Faced this year with revenue shortfalls, Governor Kitzhaber prioritized public education above all other state services in his proposed budget.

▼ The Florida Supreme Court has refused to consider a challenge, raised by the Florida Education Association and coalition allies, to the constitutionality of the state's two-year-old voucher law. Opponents now plan to redouble their efforts, challenging the voucher program as a violation of the constitutional separation between church and state.

▲ Recently, the Canadian Teachers Federation commissioned a poll to gauge public opinion on the importance of eight factors used to evaluate community schools. Pollsters found that only 40 percent of Canadians believed that pencil-and-paper test scores are very important.

"The majority of Canadians have little confidence in the credibility of school rankings," sums up CTF President Marilies Rettig. "Instead, they believe class sizes, curriculum, school budgets, and the number of educational support workers, such as guidance counselors, are more important factors to consider than test scores."

Out of the Lobby and Into the Classroom

NEA's new grassroots lobbying team builds back-home relationships with members of Congress.

Andy Lloyd

NEA grassroots lobbyist Greg Bizzarri is no stranger to politics. But he thinks any educator can talk to politicians about school needs.

High school business teacher Greg Bizzarri is just the kind of NEA member you'd like any member of Congress to meet. This Ohio educator is a volleyball coach and a senior class advisor, noting with pride that "I'm involved with kids every day, because today's youth are tomorrow's leaders."

As skilled as NEA's professional lobbyists are, wouldn't it be great if practicing educators like Greg Bizzarri were right out there with them, telling federal lawmakers from direct classroom experience about the needs—and promises—of public education?

Well, that's precisely the idea behind NEA's new grassroots lobbying team, formed to strengthen the Association's legislative action program in the home districts of members of Congress.

In 54 pivotal districts, held primarily by centrist Democratic or moderate Republican lawmakers who can unite when the agenda's *right*, NEA team members—including Greg Bizzarri—are working with fellow Association activists to build long-term working relationships with House and Senate members.

That doesn't mean NEA is turning its back on traditional allies who represent other congressional districts or states. "In fact, we hope to build a grassroots lobbying team in every district," stresses NEA Government Relations Director Mary Elizabeth Teasley.

"Even though NEA is leading in cyber-advocacy and other forms of technology, it's not enough to lobby lawmakers on Capitol Hill if this effort isn't backed up by education employees at the local level," Teasley adds. "We're going back to the strength of this organization—building grassroots member involvement with policy makers at all levels."

An organizational effort this ambitious has to start somewhere, "so we chose to start by solidifying relationships with independent-minded, mostly centrist, members of Congress who can collectively determine the outcome of many education policy debates," explains Norma Kacen, a Government Relations staffer who assists NEA's grassroots lobbying team. "We'll maintain human contact with these lawmakers and their staffs on an ongoing basis, give them needed information, and provide our grassroots lobbyists with training, basic issues information, and real-time assistance."

The bulk of that human contact will take place back home, through activities NEA team members think most appropriate, be it a coffee klatch or a town meeting.

"This is not designed to be a cookie-cutter program," Kacen notes. "The focus is on performance and results, and those results can only be achieved when we get grassroots educators to understand how important it is to tell their powerful stories to members of Congress about concerns like IDEA funding, class size, school modernization needs, and testing."

Greg Bizzarri, who teaches at St. Clairsville High School in eastern Ohio, likes the fact that he and other activists on his regional contact team—representing school districts from Zanesville to Newcomerstown—will be allowed to think and act for themselves.

"We're not a rubber stamp," says this 26-year veteran of educational political advocacy. "We'll listen to what NEA has to say, interpret it in the light of local needs, and ask, 'What does this really mean in the 18th Congressional District?'"

Bizzarri, a member of the Ohio Education Association's Educators Political Action Commission, thinks his regional team—including folks like Rita Walters, Jim McGreevey, Kathy Reid, and Jim Miller—has developed an "upbeat" lobbying model for the needs of eastern Ohio educators.

Even before linking up with the NEA grassroots team, these Ohio activists built a "good working relation-

> **"We're going back to the strength of this organization—building grassroots member involvement with policy makers at all levels."**
>
> —Mary Elizabeth Teasley, NEA Director of Government Relations

FACTS AND FIGURES

A newly released report from NEA Research, *Rankings of the States 2000 and Estimates of School Statistics 2001*, pegs the average U.S. public teacher salary for 1999-2000 at $41,724. And this report records a dramatic public school enrollment increase over the last decade—from 41 million in the fall of 1989 to 47 million in the fall of 1999.

To read the full document, go to www.nea.org/publiced/edstats.

THE BOTTOM LINE

RETENTION: A study of teacher retention problems in Philadelphia recommends lifting teachers' city residency requirements and using incentive pay to staff up high-poverty schools. www.philaedfund.org/pdfs/60_tchrs_exsum.htm.

TEST SCORES: A Massachusetts study of standardized test score patterns suggests that score gains may be pure luck and that overall test results are unreliable. www.fairtest.org/care/Vanguard%20Report%205-31-01.html.

CHILDHOOD ANXIETY: A study by the creators of TV's "Sesame Street" reveals that children ages 6-11 suffer high levels of anxiety about guns, death, violence, and the environment. http://pnnonline.org/education/sesame060101.adp.

GAY STUDENTS: The Human Rights Watch reports that gay and lesbian students often suffer daily harassment and violence by peers. Even getting to and from school safely can be a major challenge. www.hrw.org/reports/2001/uslgbt.

ship" with Republican Congressman Bob Ney and both Republican and Democratic state legislators.

The team invites these lawmakers to breakfasts, luncheons, and member retreats so they can get to know the concerns of educators from as far afield as Shadyside and Harrison Hill.

"It's important that we understand one another, and not just call these public officials when there's a problem," says Bizzarri. "We also contact them when they're doing a good job. And when they're not doing what we think they should do, we turn up the heat without being negative—we find something positive and work from there.

"Now, when I call one of these lawmakers about anything, they know who I am," Bizzarri notes. "I'm not just someone from 'the other side,' an NEA or OEA lobbyist, but a constituent who happens to be an educator. And once people from our area are elected to office, be they Republicans or Democrats, they know they have to represent their constituents."

Bizzarri admits to having been "around the polls" for some 40 years, but he doesn't think that gives him a special license to work on political campaigns or lobby the winners.

"All educators have to be involved in politics to change education—not for the sake of changing, but for the better," he says. "And school board races are the first area where Association members should be involved. School boards control the purse strings, which means everything that happens in the district, right down to class sizes."

All NEA members should—and can—become grassroots education lobbyists, Bizzarri adds.

"Who better to ask about public education than an educator?" he says. "We're out there in the districts every day and we know what's going on in the classrooms."

Moreover, "We're the biggest mediators around. We know how to work with people," Bizzarri reminds classroom colleagues. "It doesn't bother me to talk to anybody about any issue. I just need the background."

And where do you start?

"Just get out there and tell your story," Bizzarri concludes. "Most people, especially lawmakers, do respect what educators have to say." ✔

For background on the issues and legislation being tackled by the NEA grassroots lobbying team, go to www.nea.org/lac/overview.

Lobbying Tips From an Expert

Who knows better than a public official what kind of lobbying works best?

NEA grassroots lobbyist Greg Bizzarri, who's also an elected trustee of Richland Township, Ohio, points out that politicians respond best to:

- **Honesty and respect.** Don't exaggerate your case and don't insult the intelligence of office holders—they know a line when they hear it. And be just as quick to praise their actions as you are to criticize them.
- **Vision.** "Look down the road" with public officials. Show them new ideas and new concepts and tell them why you think they're valid.
- **A game plan.** Approach lobbying as you would budgeting. Remember that "everything is tied to funding" and that lawmakers need to hear: the cost of your request, where the money will come from, the term of any indebtedness incurred, and the ultimate benefit of your proposal.
- **Your special story.** Don't make blanket statements on educational needs. Focus policy makers on the special needs of your school district. After all, you're the expert. ✔

KUDOS TO. . .

Texas Becomes Healthier Place

. . . Thanks to intense lobbying by **Texas State Teachers Association** members and other educators, a public school employee health insurance law has been unanimously passed by both houses of the Texas legislature and signed by the governor. The legislation allocates $1.24 billion to fund a new statewide health insurance program, starting in the 2002-03 school year.

. . . Following a lobbying drive by **North Dakota Education Association** members, Governor John Hoeven has signed a bill that will allow districts to boost teacher salaries by $1,000 in the 2001-02 school year and $2,000 in the next school year. The bill also sets minimum teacher pay at $18,500 in 2001-02 and $20,000 in the next school year.

. . . Through the initiative of the **California Teachers Association,** the Golden State now has a law allowing passage of school bonds by 55 percent rather than the previous 66.7 percent.

In one of the first bond elections conducted under this law, CTA and the **Fresno Teachers Association** joined forces to pass a school bond by a 159-vote margin. FTA funded and ran a hard-hitting campaign—featuring a phone bank that included FTA members, local residents, students, administrators, and school board members.

. . . In Louisiana last spring, the Rapides Parish school board announced huge raises of $10,000 to $20,000 for administrators. Then the board planned cuts in teaching positions and other job categories, benefit cuts for those who remained, and material cutbacks.

To ice the cake, the board drafted a new contract giving teachers less job security—and ordered teachers to sign it immediately or lose their jobs.

The inevitable result: a four-day strike in May by the 450-member **Rapides Association of Educators.**

As a result of the strike, the parish agreed to redo the teacher contract, allow strikers to make up the four days lost to the strike, and carry out no reprisals. The big raises were kept for principals, but delayed for other managers and central office personnel.

The parish also agreed to form a committee—including representatives from all employee groups—to review all proposed raises.

AFTER COLLEGE: Seventy percent of 1992-93 college graduates did not pursue graduate degrees within four years of receiving their bachelor's degrees. Most took jobs immediately. http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/quarterly/spring/q5_2.html.

SAVINGS FOR KIDS: Almost half of U.S. children live in households with no liquid assets. Funding sources are setting up education savings accounts that kids can access at age 18. www.fordfound.org/news/view_reflection_detail.cfm?reflection_index=15.

SCHOOL TREK: A Los Angeles middle school is helping low-achieving students learn science through "Star Trek" role-playing. Teachers are uniformed "commanders" and students are "cadets." www.laep.org/06_01_01/madisonms.html.

MOTIVATION: Middle school teachers have collaborated on a set of free "Tips for Teachers" designed to help "motivate all students every day." www.publiceducation.org/cgi-bin/pubs/web_store.cgi?page=p90.htm&session.

From Double Standard to Higher Standard

Vermont ESP win state rules on paraeducator training, supervision.

Before you can talk about professional standards for paraeducators, you've got to confront some troubling *double* standards.

In too many places, paras work intimately with special education students—reinforcing instruction, attending to personal needs such as feeding, or managing an entire class—but receive little or no formal training or professional supervision. By contrast, their teacher colleagues are held to a whole battery of standards and "accountability" measures.

Even in progressive Vermont, a state that pioneered inclusive education and now ranks among jurisdictions with the fewest number of separate special ed classes, state law has long ignored the very existence of paraeductors. All the Green Mountain State has ever required of paras is a minimum age of 18 and a high school diploma.

"In Vermont, most newly hired paraeductors are placed in a job with no training whatsoever, and put to work with the most needy students," points out Corrie Palmer, a 14-year paraeducator and vice president of the Ferrisburg ESP Association. "I don't understand how a school district could do this—the student health issues alone are mind-boggling!"

This disgraceful situation is starting to change, thanks to the activism of Palmer and other members of the Vermont-NEA Paraeducator Standards Task Force. Following two years of statewide grassroots organizing, this para-run panel has persuaded the state Board of Education to formally adopt a set of paraeducator "personnel standards" in its special education rules.

Helping move this process along was the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act of 1997, which stipulates: "A State may allow paraprofessionals and assistants who are *appropriately trained and supervised* [emphasis added], in accordance with State law, regulations, or written policy . . . to be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services to children with disabilities."

Vermont's new para standards, adopted in April and awaiting final state approval, aren't as detailed as draft rules submitted by the para task force.

"They're a compromise, and they're not prescriptive" says Ellen David Friedman, a Vermont-NEA staffer and task force member, "but they do require districts to provide in-service training, evaluations, and supervision—so these rules go visibly beyond what came before."

Craig Line

Before Vermont paraeducators like Corrie Palmer (left) organized, they were ignored by state law. Now, new state rules require entry-level and in-service para training, ongoing supervision by "qualified" personnel, and proper evaluations.

The new Vermont standards will require school employers to:

- **Identify** the training needs of pareducators who "assist qualified personnel in the provision of special ed and related services."
- **Provide** paras entry-level training as needed and ongoing in-service training to "ensure that paraeducators are appropriately trained."
- **Provide** ongoing supervision of paraeducators by "qualified" personnel, licensed to provide special education and related services.
- **Develop** and implement procedures for performance evaluations of paras by "appropriate professional staff."

Performance evaluations are important to paras, Palmer explains, "because a lot of our colleagues get no work evaluations whatsoever. They're never told if they do a good job or not, be it the way they handle students or how they're getting points across in math or reading reinforcement."

While Palmer believes the new Vermont rules are a good starting point, she stresses that the para task force "will definitely follow up to push for even stricter standards."

The panel and Vermont-NEA will also work for school district compli-

Here's How *You* Can Get Started

If your state doesn't yet have para regulations, here's a little start-up advice from members of the Vermont-NEA Paraeducator Standards Task Force:

- Start by talking to one or two paras in other districts who see the need for standards, then reach out to other interested paras.
- Create a task force and invite your NEA state affiliate on board.
- Ask colleagues in your own district what state rules are and aren't needed, and come to task force meetings "prepared to defend your statements."
- Draft some paraeducator standards and present them to other school stakeholders—like parents and advocates for the disabled—who have a stake in better-trained and supervised paras. Get their buy-in.
- Line up backing from sympathetic administrators and approach your state education department for support.
- Keep working, keep gaining allies, and keep reminding everyone that you're doing this to improve education for kids with the greatest needs.

ance with the new regs—while educating the school community that proper para training and supervision needn't drain school budgets.

"When superintendents and administrators say, 'There's no money for training,' we'll encourage them to think about models of peer mentoring and training," says Friedman.

"We'll encourage Vermont-NEA local affiliates to bargain for additional employer-provided training, designed and produced with the participation of paras themselves," Friedman adds. "In Rutland, Vermont, Association members and management sat down and worked out a deal with the local vo-tech center to provide low-tuition courses taught by experienced paras—for professional development credits!"

An equally intriguing model can be found in Corrie Palmer's own backyard.

In anticipation of the statewide paraeducator standards, the Ferrisburg school district created a full para training program with entry-level courses, an option to participate in teacher training sessions, para-only workshops, and reimbursement for up to three credits at the University of Vermont.

And, better yet, Ferrisburg ESP and teachers created a culture that values paras' personal and professional development. "New para hires get a lot of support from teachers and other paras," says Palmer. "Their questions get answered and they're constantly reassured by senior colleagues that 'We're here for you.'" ✔

For more information on the new Vermont paraeducator standards, contact Vermont NEA staffer Ellen David Friedman at 802/223-6375. And check out two books of special interest to paraeducators published by the NEA Professional Library: *The New IDEA Survival Guide* (Item #2016-2-00-PL) and *Let's Team Up: A Checklist for Paraeducators, Teachers, and Principals* (Item #2163-0-00-PL).

For price and ordering information, go to www.nea.org/books or call 800/229-4200.

MEMBER MILESTONES

■ In July, NEA Representative Assembly delegates voted to change the definition of ESP from "education support personnel" to "education support *professionals*." This name change "acknowledges the major contribution ESP make for children and public education," says Karen Mahurin, president of NEA's National Council for ESP.

■ The NEA-Retired Task Force has successfully lobbied for Education Employees Liability Insurance for members who return to teach in the classroom. The coverage had been available to NEA-Retired Lifetime members for many years.

In May, the NEA Legal Services Program announced an expansion of coverage to include NEA-Retired annual members, beginning September 1, 2001.

Do'ers Profile

NICOLE KENDALL

■ ***Name and Profession:*** Nicole Kendall, second-year fifth grade math, science, and social studies teacher.

■ ***NEA local affiliate:*** Metro Nashville (Tennessee) Education Association.

■ ***Positions:*** Former leader in the NEA Student Program. Now a building rep, co-chair of the MNEA Membership Committee, local political action council member, and member of the Tennessee Education Association's New Teacher Committee.

■ ***Preparation for Association activism:*** In the NEA Student Program, I saw that your voice really is heard in NEA, that you're not just a number. It was exciting to know that there are 2.5 million NEA members and that I was one of them.

My new local Association didn't have to talk to me about the power of lobbying in numbers, because I'd already done that as a Student member. And I learned that your classroom complaints are more "valid" when you're an Association member.

■ ***Preparation for the classroom:*** The Student Program sharpened my leadership skills, tuned me into NEA's vast Web resources, and helped me build a network of professional colleagues I can call on as a resource bank.

I recently had some lawyers, whom I met through lobbying, come to my classroom to talk about constitutional amendments and current legal developments. I also E-mail a lot of former and current Student Program members. They're my support, and I give them insight I've picked up in the classroom.

■ ***A better school ambassador:*** Thanks to my involvement in the NEA Student Program's Outreach To Teach Program—which encourages community people to get involved in schools—I have greater confidence in talking to our community partners who donate to my campus, the Walter Stokes Middle School.

I also ask parents for help, and they love that I ask. I've had so much parent involvement this year—it's wonderful!

■ ***Reaching other new teachers:*** As local membership co-chair for the 2001-02 school year, my job is to help first-year teachers understand why they need to be involved in the Association. I approach them by learning their concerns and finding out what their needs are.

A lot of new teachers say, "I thought that joining the Association was something you did when you got tenure." They don't understand this is something you can do during your first year of teaching. They need to understand what their membership means, and what support they get through it.

■ ***What new teachers want:*** We want to know about things like support, professional development, liability insurance, resources on the Internet, what the professional Association can do to make us better teachers and leaders, and how to get grants.

One of the big things for new teachers is getting on our feet after college, after loans, and managing this great, wonderful paycheck that we never thought we would make. A lot of things, like home insurance and credit card balances, can scare new teachers.

■ ***A word to veteran teachers:*** Move beyond the labels of Generation X or Y and see new teachers as colleagues that you want to keep in the profession, that you want to be just as competent as you are.

A lot of vets say things like, "You're the same age as my daughter." Maybe so, but we're also your colleagues, we're working next door to you, and we also have to teach children.

Just remember how you felt in your first year, knowing that there were a lot of obstacles, plus the temptation of other professions that could easily pull you out.

Tell new teachers, "We're glad you're here. We know it's hard, but we're here to help you any way we can."

And don't assume that they know that. ✔

Contact Nicole Kendall at nicmkend@hotmail.com.

Bargaining without a Bargaining Law

By sticking together and "chipping away" at their school board, members of the Mitchell County (Georgia) Bus Drivers recently won two years of back overtime pay for 13 drivers. These employees had worked dual jobs—like driver and paraeducator—but never got time and a half when their combined work hours exceeded 40 in a week.

The 35-member MCBD never had to file a wage and hour complaint under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The local, which has 100 percent membership, relied on tactics that had previously yielded pay scale upgrades and management support for school bus safety.

The winning tactic: Mitchell County drivers told their story together, both through one-on-one chats with the seven school board members and a group visit to a board meeting. At that meeting, "We gave a face to a dilemma," says former local activist Rosa Ward, who estimates the loss of overtime pay deprived her of $350 a month.

"We talked about light bills and car payments we couldn't make," Ward recalls, "and we all said we needed to find another job."

Mitchell County drivers "bargained" an overtime settlement—and enforcement of the FLSA—without the benefit of a state bargaining law. "Now the Georgia Association of Educators is looking to help ESP do the same in seven other counties," notes Ward, a UniServ director who specializes in UniServ organizing. Stay tuned. ✔

INTERVIEW

Meet America's Top Superintendent

U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige speaks out on testing, vouchers, education funding, and unions.

Americans have deemed education a top national priority. So what's Secretary of Education Rod Paige's vision for the future? Before being appointed to the post by President Bush in January, Paige was superintendent of the Houston, Texas school district. This summer, NEA Today*'s Dave Winans interviewed Paige in Los Angeles, before the secretary delivered the keynote address at NEA's Conference on Bargaining and Instructional Issues.*

What role do you see yourself playing as Secretary of Education?

The big goal of this department can be wrapped up in two words: access and excellence. That means assuring access to quality education, primarily to those who face barriers to this access, and excellence for all.

What is the federal government's role in turning around low-performing schools and closing the achievement gap?

Few people have had the courage to stand up on the federal level and talk about the achievement gap. President Bush has, and I think we should give him credit for that. When he talks about the achievement gap, the kids who are on the bottom side of that achievement gap are primarily the ones that he is insisting on helping.

Now, we would not know we had an achievement gap unless we paid attention to test data. There are many people who would say, "Let's don't even test." If we didn't, we would not know that we have an achievement gap—and everybody could smile and think everything was fine. But this President said: "No, we are going to test. We are going to make the gaps clear, because once you make these gaps visible, action has to come."

More on testing later. But first, what concretely must we do to close the achievement gap?

What has to be done may involve spending, or may not. And this is not new with Rod Paige or George W. Bush. We already know everything we need to know to go in and fix the problems of these kids that need fixing. In fact, we have not done it, but it's not because we don't know how. We have not had this as a priority.

It's about leadership?

It's about accepting responsibility.

Responsibility—that's the other side of the accountability coin. It means we take it upon ourselves to be responsible for closing this gap. NEA President Bob Chase has got it right—he is right down the center with this.

We should supply technical assistance, resources, and encouragement, ask for results, and measure and even sanction what is necessary and warrant when it is necessary. But the person at the point of action who is going to get it done—that is who it's going to take.

By the way, this is not new to us. We have known this for a long time. Probably the difference is that for President Bush, the difference is intolerable.

Let's describe the achievement gap this way: It's inexcusable, it's intolerable, and it's un-American.

Well, there won't be any arguments from most folks on the scene. But what about the reality of funding?

I want to be sure I am clear here: Funding absolutely is needed. I want to champion that. The President understands that there needs to be increased funding. That is why this department was funded, in terms of a percentage increase, greater than any other domestic department.

President Bush understands that, but he opposes the fact that funds are not at all linked to results. So it is not that we don't need funds. We are champions of increased funds, but funds tied to reform, to results.

What are your thoughts on funding for Title I and IDEA? Teachers have to work with kids with many different learning styles and many different disabilities, plus class sizes that are way up there . . .

I don't have to be sold on that. I saw it firsthand. But in the back of my head I keep thinking: The funding is increasing. It continues to increase. What amount of increase is going to be necessary before this line moves?

Besides, why is it that we can see kids prospering and flying like eagles in places where we don't have [increased funding]? Let us shout together for funding reform rather than just funding.

Our rhetoric has to be different. We've got to rephrase this argument differently.

What rhetoric is hurting us?

The total emphasis on nothing but funding, funding, funding and not having any words in the dialogue, any comments that point back at us what we can do better, what we have to change. The argument seems to be that we can continue to do what we're doing without any modification or reform, and the whole situation can be improved by just giving us more money.

What do you think about education unions?

Let me tell you honestly that I had a negative relationship with unions to begin with. OK, I saw them as the problem. That changed about 60 percent into my tenure as superintendent.

The union leader I dealt with in Houston was a very aggressive union person—in the AFL-CIO's greatest traditions, understand. She and I began to focus on our similarities, as opposed to our differences. We found points where the two of us could stand side by side and talk about changing things and making stuff better.

As I listened to her, I understood that down in her core she was a champion for children. And I assumed that she, standing next to me, began to accept that I understood that the working conditions of adults have to be looked out for, too.

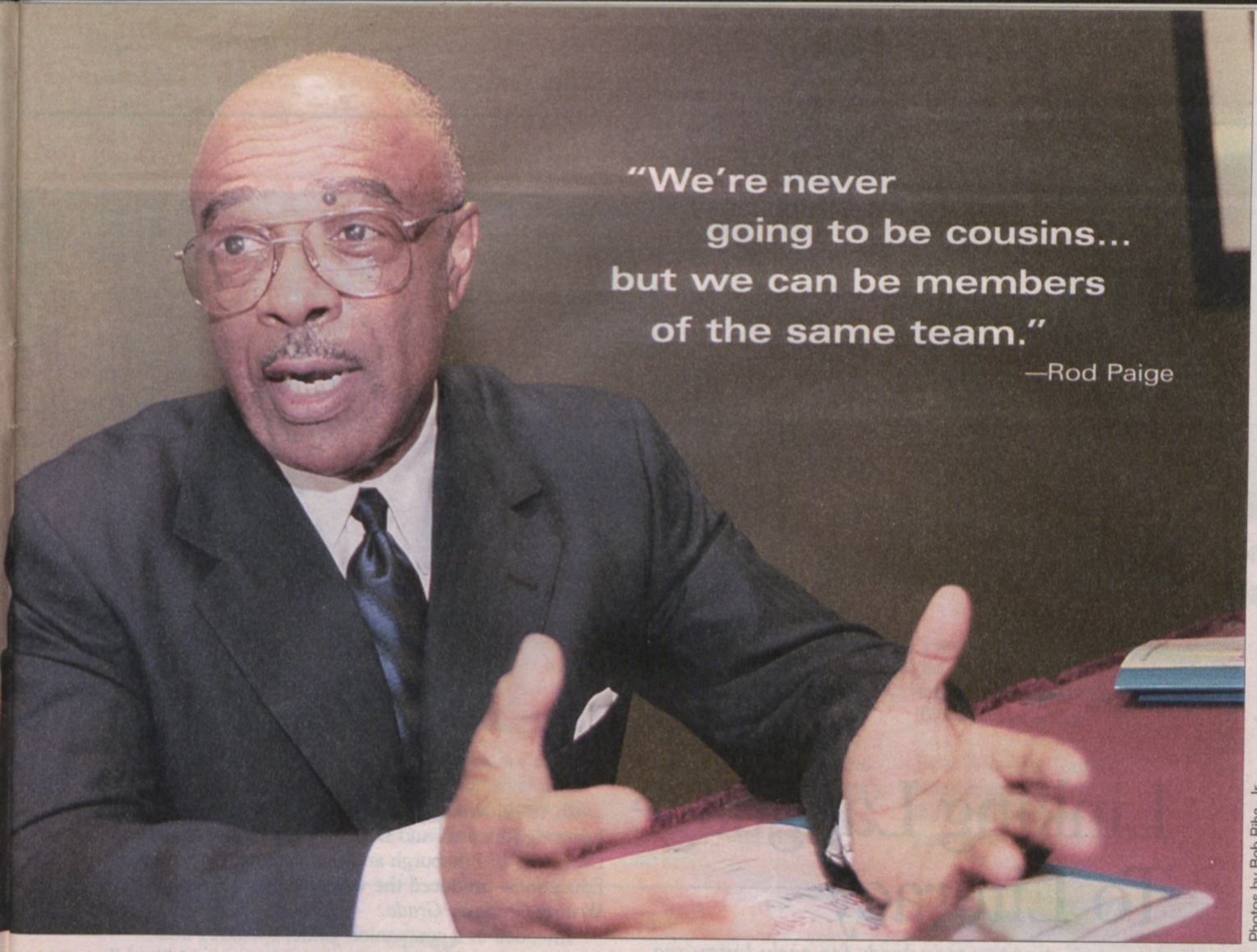
We're never going to be cousins, understand? But we can be members of the same team.

Many of our members feel their lives are almost dictated by test scores. What are your thoughts on standardized tests?

Conceptually, I have to agree that there are things that are not measured by standardized tests. Anyone who has good training knows that.

When a school or district goes out and says they are going to measure teacher and student progress all by how the students do on a standardized test, unless the curriculum is aligned to the test, you've got a problem here.

OK, so we are talking about first saying: This is what we want a child to accomplish, this is what we want a child to know, this is what we want a child to be able to do. How do we know whether the child is actually



Photos by Bob Riha, Jr.

learning this or not?

If somebody says, "Well, we can do portfolios," what I am hearing is: Fuzzy it up, so that we can have some wiggle room here. So the answer is NO—we are going to have clear, crisp tests. These tests say this kid has accomplished or not accomplished the fundamental objectives and the fundamentals of what the course is about.

Now, once we test this kid, we can see the distance between what we want this kid to learn and what he has actually learned. What are we going to do with that? We take that information and bring it back and involve teaching.

If the testing is crisp enough, it could be precise enough to tell you not just that a kid has flunked eighth grade math or eighth grade algebra, but which of the objectives of the eighth grade algebra the kid did not get. The only way to find this out is through crisp, clear testing.

What is the Bush administration currently proposing as far as annual testing?

First, every kid should be tested every year at the end of the year, in every course. Now that is not what the [Administration proposal] says, it's what I think.

What the [proposal] says is that there's testing every year in grades 3 through 8 in math and reading. We understand this does not make the world safe for democracy. But what it does is give us some objective data with which to make decisions.

At the school they are going to make pedagogical decisions. They'll ask, "Are our teaching materials right? Are our teaching strategies right? Are we giving the kids the right experiences? We know because we just got this information back from testing."

At the federal level we are going to be making certain decisions, too, based on this information. Are the dollars we send to the schools being used properly? Is this a wise investment? Should we use this information for pedagogical purposes or accountability purposes, both formatively and summatively?

I understand that in Houston you used vouchers to relieve overcrowding. What are your thoughts on these "publicly funded scholarships"?

OK, let's take it from a conceptual point. The state of Texas has in its constitution, as do most other states, language that says every child is due a free and appropriate education. That's it. Now, to get that, somebody has devised a structure we call public education. But "free and appropriate" is a concept. No one has dictated that it should be organized like we have it—school districts, schools, school boards, and all.

The whole point is that every child should have an education, and this education should be appropriate, and this education should be funded and paid for by the state. So there is no crisp line here between public and private.

Let's go back over this—public libraries, public highways, public hospitals, public health service, public schools. There is only one term I could find that flows through all of this, and that is access. It means that the public has access to these activities and venues, and the schools are the same way.

So it doesn't make any difference how they are operated. If a public person has access to a private school paid for by public dollars, that is in total fulfillment of free and appropriate education. So our question should be which one of these methodologies best provides an education for the child.

What are your thoughts on incentive pay for teachers or schools?

I would like to start with the fact that teachers are underpaid. And I think they will remain underpaid as long as the structure we use to pay teachers does not distinguish between high performers and low performers or substandard performers. I can't find any place or any big enterprise based on people—such as public schools—where salaries would be respectable enough under this kind of structure.

What's the one thing you would like to tell America's educators as the "top superintendent"?

I would like to tell them that we may have come to this place on different ships, but we're in the same boat. There's no reason to duke it out here. Let's switch the focus away from our differences, which are clear and obvious, and shift that focus to working together to make life better for our children.

Because when we make life better for children, we make life better for ourselves. And we will gain the respect of the public, and the public will be more willing to invest dollars in us. ✔

For more information from both Secretary Paige's office and the Department of Education, go to www.ed.gov. And for NEA's policies on issues raised in this interview, go to www.nea.org/lac.

John Heller

Daniel

Linking Language To Literacy

New performance standards for early language

Jerlean Daniel and a panel of literacy and early childhood experts are quickly dispelling the old adage that children should be seen and not heard. They've recently released research and instruction-based standards for early language development titled *Speaking and Listening for Preschool through Third Grade.*

The product of two years' work by the New Standards Primary Literacy Committee, this book and CD-ROM show speech as the building block to literacy and offer guidance on what speaking and listening abilities educators should expect from children at different ages.

"As adults, we communicate with the written word. But preschoolers become literate through speaking and listening," says Daniel. "They're working on literacy without ever having written a word or being able to read."

In 1999, New Standards—a joint program of the Learning Research and Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh and the National Center on Education—produced the widely adopted *Reading & Writing Grade by Grade.*

Intended as a companion guide, *Speaking and Listening* describes the various oral language skills children need, such as narrating, explaining and seeking information, and giving and understanding directions. Video clips show preschool though primary-grade children participating in book talks to demonstrate each standard.

"These standards call attention to the highly social nature of literacy," says Daniel, associate professor of education at the University of Pittsburgh and a former child care center director.

"Children and adults work together to help the child explore language, think about experiences they've had, and explain what they've seen through storytelling."

Daniel sees particular relevance of such standards in today's climate of accountability because, unlike test scores alone, they give parents and teachers solid information and skills to help a child move toward literacy.

For More: Visit www.ncee.org.

Leo Sorel

Nellen

Caught Up in the Webbed Classroom

At first, **Ted Nellen** didn't want to teach about computers. He was a Shakespeare scholar and an English teacher. But he was also the only teacher without tenure at New York City's Murry Bergtraum High School, so he didn't have much choice. That was in 1984.

"I went reluctantly into the computer room," he recalls. "But I soon realized the power of technology."

Nellen has since become a pioneer in turning traditional classes into webbed ones. His inner-city students publish every assignment, from haikus to research papers, on their Web sites.

A retired teacher came across Nellen's class site while surfing the net and started sending notes to the students. She told friends, who told their friends, and now business executives, teachers, and college students communicate with the students via E-mail, which makes the students take their writing more seriously.

"A lot of these students have experienced many failures, so they are not enthusiastic about education," Nellen says. "Self-publishing empowers them."

His students often come in early, skip lunch, and stay late. "By using the Web, we reinforce the notion that schools are for kids, not adults," he says. "We teach them to think, not regurgitate."

Today, at Bronx Technology High School, he helps other teachers integrate technology with their classes.

"Teachers don't have to master technology in one semester," he says. "They just have to start."

For More: Explore http://tnellen.net/cyberenglish/ and www.infotoday.com/MMSchools/jan99/nellen.htm. Or try www.tnellen.com/ted/#pu.

Texas Drivers Teach Bus Safety

Sayers & Hambley Gary Barber

Three years ago, in response to a teacher's request, Plano, Texas bus drivers **Irene Sayers** (left) and **Dona Hambly** went looking for a good bus safety videotape. But all they found were outdated cartoons and a film called "Death Zone," which depicted children getting run over by buses.

The film was shown, but "the teacher and students were horrified," says Hambly.

Hambly and Sayers set out to create a school bus safety curriculum everyone would be proud of. They spent over a year contacting other school districts and viewing an endless stream of videos.

"All of the materials were either boring, outdated, or too remedial. So we wrote our own lesson plans and worked with teachers to pilot them," says Sayers.

Aimed at K-5 students, the 45-minute lessons cover basic rules and give children useful pointers like: Make eye contact with the driver when you cross in front of a bus.

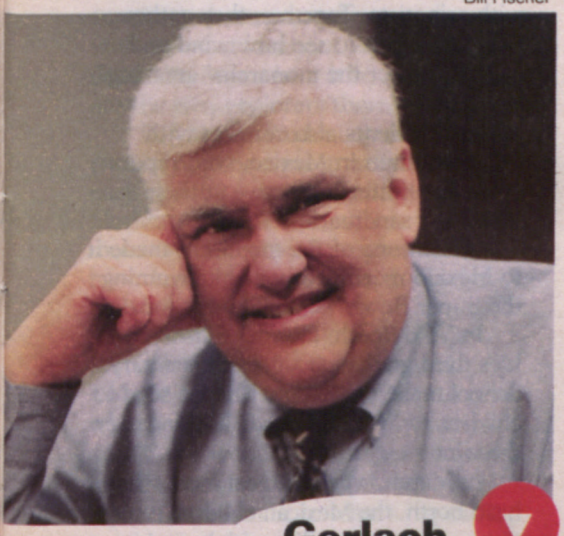
The lessons are tailored for each grade level. For the youngest students, the main goal is to get them to sit in their seats. "We teach them the 4Bs: back-to-back and bottom-to-bottom," says Hambly.

Older children learn where to find the flares and how to help in an emergency.

"Teachers have been grateful," says Hambly. "Having a real bus driver in the classroom talking about safety gives the lesson credibility and urgency."

For More: Contact Hambly and Sayers: jhdh21@home.com or gasayers@juno.com.

Bill Fischer



Gerlach

Paraeducators On the Team

NEA member **Kent Gerlach** *is a veteran special education teacher, professor—and a strong advocate of more cohesive teamwork among teachers, paraeducators, and administrators. His new book, Let's Team Up: A Checklist for Paraeducators, Teachers, and Principals, was recently released by the NEA Professional Library.*

What inspired the checklist?
Paraeducators have been part of our school systems for 50 years. But little work has been done to define their roles.

Today, we face a teacher shortage, larger classrooms, a more diverse student body, and more students with special needs. As a result, we're using more paraeducators than ever before.

It's critical that they be able to work effectively with teachers and administrators.

How does the checklist help build partnership?
It clarifies roles and relationships among teachers, paraeducators, principals, and students in a way that can be adapted to any education environment. Once such roles are understood and respected, you can build teamwork. And teamwork is fundamental to the education mission.

How should the checklist be used?
Individual paraeducators can use it throughout the year to help formulate questions or clarify their duties. Teachers and principals can use it the same way to strengthen their leadership. It can also be used by schools and school districts for team-building and on-the-job training.

It also offers a valuable guide to multimedia resources on teamwork.

What's an example of a situation in which the checklist can be useful?
Paraeducators used to be seen as clerical assistants. Now, they're expected to be instructional assistants. But many have had little training for this role.

So let's say a paraeducator is working directly with special education students. A teacher in this situation has had many hours of specialized training in how to interact with these students. The paraeducator may have had none.

The checklist would guide the paraeducator to seek appropriate assistance from the teacher. It would guide the teacher to be aware of his or her vital supervisory role. And it would make principals and other administrators more aware of the demands being placed on paraeducators, so that they can make training available.

For More: ***Let's Team Up*** **is available to NEA members for $5.50. Order on the Web at www.nea.org/ books or call 800/229-4200.**

Teachers Plan Their Staff Development

For years, Minnesota's public school educators have been pressing legislators to do more for professional development.

That effort paid off last year when the legislature gave Education Minnesota, the merged NEA-AFT state affiliate, $800,000 to evaluate professional development in each school district and to recommend improvements.

Education Minnesota decided its own members know better than anyone else what's happening in their districts. So the union trained more than 500 members to do the evaluation as part of a program called Teachers as Learners and Leaders, or TALL. Most districts now have two trained Education Minnesota "professional development activists" who know what's needed and are working with the local union and school administration to make it happen.

One of the new professional development activists is Jay Anderson, a curriculum specialist in the Osseo district north of Minneapolis. "TALL was a nice way to collaborate and find out what other districts are doing," he says.

His colleague Candace Gordon, also in the Osseo district, calls TALL "a terrific experience" with great potential to lead to higher student achievement.

Education Minnesota staff member Sara Gjerdrum says TALL has already led to the creation of professional development committees in districts where there were none before. New programs for teachers will begin running this fall.

"TALL has activated hundreds of people to become involved in staff development, and they are involving others," notes Gjerdrum. "The response has been phenomenal. Things will never go back to where they were before."

For More:
Go to www.educationminnesota.org/index.cfm?SECTION_ID=8.

Journey North

300,000 children bond while tracking nature's ultimate survivor story.

Some of Cathie Plaehn's fifth graders have never seen the Atlantic Ocean, the Appalachian Mountains, or Mexico. They've lived their whole lives in Boyceville, Wisconsin, population 900.

But through the Web-based science education project Journey North, these Tiffany Creek Elementary School children have traveled the world, trekking thousands of miles with butterflies, sea turtles, and other migratory animals.

And along the way, they've met other students from Mexico to Canada.

More than 300,000 students and their teachers use Journey North to supplement their textbooks with real life, following animals, chatting with scientists, and comparing notes across the continent as the changing seasons sweep south in autumn and north in the spring.

One important feature of Journey North is that it's not all-or-nothing. "I've adjusted my involvement each year," says Plaehn. "That's the beauty of the program. You choose as much or as little as you want."

While most of the activities are in the spring, teachers say the smaller Journey South program in the fall is a good time to get involved.

The project, funded by Annenberg/CPB, was started in 1994 by Elizabeth Howard, a former Nature Conservancy scientist.

"It's the ultimate survivor story," says Howard. "Changing weather and lack of food face migratory species as they travel the globe or pass through our backyards. What better way to engage students in science?"

Red Morgan/Silver Image

Allison Bailey's Florida third graders create paper butterflies that will winter in a Mexican classroom. Expansive Journey North programs like this have students "digging harder and thinking smarter," says Bailey.

The first time Cathie Plaehn used Journey North in her rural Wisconsin classroom, she recalls, "We were watching satellite transmissions from sea turtles, and saw that one of them was floating out into the Atlantic.

"We spent days hypothesizing what was wrong and finally figured out that a turtle's transmitter had broken loose. It was incredibly exciting to watch these students turn into scientists. They wouldn't give up without an answer."

At York Middle School in Nebraska, Gayle Kloewer and her seventh graders raise and tag monarch butterflies, and use Journey North to track them as they fly to Mexico for the winter.

The Journey North Web site—named 1999 Best Education Site by the International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences—links Kloewer's students with scientists. Together, they gather migration data to see how wind and weather affect the monarchs' amazing voyage.

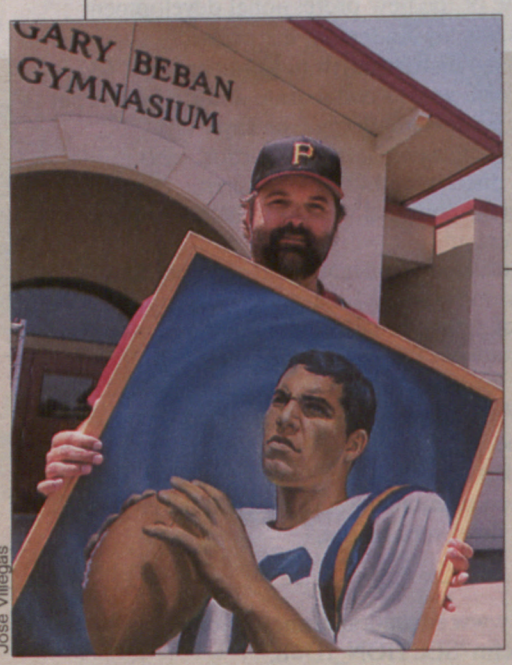
The students also connect with schoolchildren in Mexico, who report when the butterflies arrive at their mountain sanctuaries.

"When one of the monarchs made it to Mexico recently, it was like winning the Super Bowl," says Kloewer.

In Vero Beach, Florida, Allison Bailey's third graders at Citrus Elementary School make paper butterflies to send to children in Mexico for safe keeping over the winter.

In March, when the real monarchs head north, the Mexican children return the symbolic butterflies with messages for their American friends.

Journey North also sends students weekly Challenge Questions. "As my students answer the questions, they



José Villegas

How I Did It

Bret Baird
Kennedy Middle School
Physical education teacher
Redwood City, California

A school hall of fame gives students role models for their own lives.

Three years ago, I polled my 170 students and asked who their role models were. The winners? Jerry Springer and Dennis Rodman.

This perplexed me. I view these two as entertainers at best, and not the sort of people students should emulate. During this same time, my district passed its first bond measure in 50 years, and my school was to receive a new gymnasium. I suggested naming the gym after our most famous athlete, 1967 Heisman Trophy winner Gary Beban.

When I contacted Beban, now president of a real estate firm, he was flattered but didn't want to be the only one honored. He gave me names of two classmates who he thought should get some recognition. That gave me the idea of starting a school hall of fame.

At first, the hall was to be about athletes, but that discriminated against women, who didn't get the same opportunities as men until the1970s with the passage of Title IX. So our hall of fame vision became:

- Provide models for students.
- Honor all walks of life.
- Invite inductees to visit our school and share their life experiences.

come up with more questions about why and how," says Bailey.

Holly Cerullo's seventh grade students at the Joyce Middle School in Woburn, Massachusetts are tracking tulips, not butterflies. They plant bulbs in October to investigate the relationship between geography and the arrival of spring.

They also answer their own questions about tulips, such as: Will it grow if I plant it sideways? What if I take off the bulb's skin?

The students report their observations on the Journey North Web site. When the tulips bloom, they announce to the world that spring has arrived in Woburn.

Students across North America use these announcements to follow the green wave of spring sweeping north.

In Mystery Class, another popular Journey North activity, students get weekly clues to the locations of 10 mystery classes—sunrise and sunset times and facts about history, geography, and culture.

"You can't bottle the excitement of Mystery Class," says Wisconsin's Cathie Plaehn.

"You start with nothing more than a sunrise and sunset, and you end up with an exact location. When the students discover where it is, it's as if they are the first explorers there."

"Before, my students learned different science concepts in isolation from each other," says Allison Bailey in Florida. "Now, a unit on how the Earth moves through space prepares us for how the seasons change and why animals migrate."

Nebraska's Gayle Kloewer says Journey North makes science real. "Why wasn't I paying attention to what was happening right outside my window?" she wonders. "Instead of opening the book to this chapter and this topic, I now link it to what's happening outside." ✔

—Dina S. Gómez

For more: Explore Journey North at www.learner.org/jnorth.

The inaugural class has 11 role models: a fisherman, bank executive, pilot, coach, singer, software CEO, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame drummer, shoe inventor, professional sports team executive, architect, and Beban. At the gym's opening last March, nine of the 11 came to share their experiences with our students.

Over the past 50 years, Kennedy Middle School has produced 15,000 graduates. They are our greatest achievement. Now, when students enter our gym, walk by the duplicate Heisman Trophy, and see the hall of fame plaques, maybe they too will be inspired to develop their gifts and pursue their dreams.

[DILEMMA]

How do you help a student who has poor hygiene?

At the beginning of school and in the spring, I make a hygiene speech. I mention the importance of bathing and wearing clean clothes. I say, if anyone has a problem, see me privately. I offer to bring soap and deodorant if a lack of toiletries is an issue, and assure students that anything shared with me is confidential.

Anjanette M. Clark
High school communication arts teacher
St. Louis, Missouri

■ I attempt to gain the confidence of the student, and then ask if he or she minds if I talk with a parent. If the answer is no, I pursue it tactfully with the student. I let the student know they have a friend in me. That hasn't failed. Attitudes have improved and, in some instances, grades as well.

Jeanne Franklin
Middle school administrative assistant
Richmond, Virginia

Tedd Pitts

■ I work with elementary special education students and we do a hygiene unit. A dental hygienist visits to discuss brushing habits. We've used trade books on hygiene topics in our reading groups. I also use a workbook on life skills for students with special needs.

Lindy Beckman
Elementary special education teacher
Corunna, Michigan

■ I used to refer students to the school nurse, who would contact the parents. She occasionally would give that child a bath and a change of clothes. Years ago when I first taught, I helped students by providing clothing from my nieces and nephews. When I see a child wearing a school uniform that needs a wash, I mention it to the classroom teacher.

Jacqueline Shak
Elementary ESL teacher
Honolulu, Hawaii

■ Before each school year, I go to a discount drug store and raid bins of sample-size deodorant, shampoo, and toothbrushes. Every year, I give a hygiene speech and explain that it's students' responsibility to make being close to others as pleasant as possible. I tell them personal hygiene items aren't inexpensive. If they need these items, I have some. If there's still someone who offends others, I tell that person a better effort is needed. I provide a bag of hygiene items, and tell him or her that more are available if needed.

Nancy J. Compton
Vocal music teacher
Wolcott, New York

■ Our school nurse talks with individuals or the entire class and gives out personal hygiene packets.

When I taught Behavior Disabilities, a committee that included parents put hygiene goals in students' Individual Education Plans. Now, when I deal with hygiene issues in class, I remind students to take baths. They earn play money for completing assignments, which they use to buy prizes. These include toothbrush kits and soap. The children buy these up quickly! I let them pick out another prize if they choose a personal hygiene item.

Tammy Tankersley
Special needs teacher
Hopkinsville, Kentucky

■ First, I find out if there's a financial issue or abuse that might hinder a child's efforts to be clean. If so, I find a way to provide the child with hygiene items, and we have a private talk.

I use humor, discussing how hot it is and what it would be like with lots of stinky bodies. I say I'm only a teacher and can't afford millions of dollars for air freshener and gas masks. That may sound crude, but the kids laugh and get the point.

Susan Titus
Seventh grade math and science teacher
Jacksonville, North Carolina

■ For elementary students:
- Read personal hygiene books about children of the same ages, emphasizing social rejection.
- Role play games and songs such as "This is the way I brush my teeth."
- If the problem is really bad, talk to the parent.

For middle and high school:
- Show videos on personal hygiene.
- Hold panel discussions on hygiene and stopping the spread of illnesses. Stress the pain of rejection due to poor hygiene.
- Invite a public health department speaker.

Amy Frost
Education student and substitute teacher
Decatur, Alabama

Got an Answer?

How do you get your students back to work after a holiday?

E-mail your answer to dilemma2@neatoday.nea.org. Or send by regular mail, or fax to 202/822-7206. Please include your name, city, state, and job title. Published respondents will receive an *NEA Today* mug!

Experimenting With Success

A gifted and talented program in Maryland launches girls' interest in science.

Space Mission EX-4 sounds like a 1950s sci-fi movie. But for fourth graders in Waugh Chapel Elementary's gifted and talented program, it's a real-life mission exploring the effects of space and future careers in science.

And for two all-girl teams—whose projects were selected for integration on NASA's space shuttle *Discovery*, March 8, 2001—it was an experiment in success.

Over 14 months, these all-girl teams conducted research, developed protocols, formed hypotheses, and observed the results of two original experiments: one involving sugar, the other, textiles.

"The project was a fantastic opportunity for the girls to witness science curriculum in action and connect its application to the real world," says project sponsor Linda Stoll, language arts and science teacher at Waugh Chapel Elementary in Odenton, Maryland.

"The girls took ownership of their experiments," says co-sponsor Jennifer Unger, a fourth grade science teacher who collaborated with media specialist Mitsn Mitchell on the technology component. "It was as motivating for the teachers and parents as it was for the students."

Developed as a joint venture between the Anne Arundel County Public Schools Gifted and Talented Office, the county's science office, and NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, Space Mission EX-4 is a Maryland-initiated, interdisciplinary program that begins as general exploratory science activities for all county fourth graders. But midway through the unit, classes are broken down into smaller investigative groups, and those students showing advanced aptitude for science are selected for the enrichment program.

"Students self-selected groups by interest, such as botany, physics, medicine, or earth and space science," explains Unger. "Some groups were all boys, some all girls, some mixed gender."

Students worked independently and in small groups to create and conduct scientific trials. They wrote up theories and tracked data in journals. They used a digital camera, scanner, and presentation software to report their findings. And at year's end, some opted to exhibit at a county-wide Space Expo.

Four months later, Stoll and Unger learned that NASA had selected two experiments for inclusion in the space shuttle *Discovery* mission in March 2001, and that those chosen were created by two different all-girl teams, both from Waugh Elementary. Further, the teams were invited to Wallops Island, Virginia to integrate their experiments into vials and to Florida to witness the Kennedy Space Center launch.

What did the eager young women want to know? Will fibers change shape and size in zero gravity? Will different types of sugar dissolve in the same amount of time after being in space?

Stoll was particularly excited about continuing to help a new generation of young girls develop a love for science.

"I met John Glenn early in my teaching career," says Stoll, "and I remember that in his speech, he gave credit to the women behind the men. The space program has come so far since then. Now we have role models like Barbara Morgan and Christa McAuliffe, and women are giving credit to women."

Funded through a state Department of Education grant, Space Mission EX-4 connects to Maryland's state science curriculum and performance assessment outcomes. Over three years, NASA and county gifted and talented resource teachers have trained teachers in all 78 Anne Arundel County elementary schools in the curriculum.

"Writing in the content area is a big focus," says Stoll. "Students have to record their progress, justify why their experiment should be chosen, and constantly revise for improvement."

And Stoll is quick to point out other

Idea Exchange

Spelling Test Bingo

My class plays Spelling Test Bingo. I create a blank Bingo board and make copies. Students number the boxes and pick where to write their spelling words.

We exchange papers and correct them. If a word is misspelled, it's rewritten correctly. Then the papers are returned.

I write the spelling words on small pieces of paper, place them in a hat, and pull them out. When a student gets Bingo, he or she must stand up and spell out all the words correctly in order to win a prize.

The class loves this game, and it's great for test review.

Vickie Hugo
Buttonwillow, California

Military Cheer

Just before the holidays, I had students collect and mail generic "Happy Holiday" cards to soldiers. Students signed and wrote a note in the cards but provided no personal information, and we used the school's return address. We then sent a package of cards to "Any Soldier" for the soldier to share with his or her friends. We found the mailing addresses for the Naval fleet on its Web site (www.navy.mil).

Students also took cards to the local VA hospital. It's a great feeling to pass on good cheer to those who protect our freedom.

Christy Goodney
Vancouver, Washington

Updating History

I bypass the argument that specific historical data isn't needed in the everyday workplace by focusing on writing.

I emphasize to students that the knowledge they gain in American history is not simply factual, but broad to help them understand human nature.

I remind students that we are a communication-oriented society. E-mail and faxes need to be written clearly and concisely. Students report research by using a Power Point presentation or by building a Web page. Through this they learn the information and valuable technological skills.

Mar Van Over
Phoenix, Arizona

Works 4 Me
nea's e-mail classroom tip of the week!

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Photos by Charles Votaw

Young scientists examine results of their NASA experiment as teachers Linda Stoll (left) and Jennifer Unger look on.

skills the girls developed, such as self-confidence, cooperative problem-solving, and achieving success through a long-term commitment.

With the launch date set for Spring 2001, there were plenty of mission-critical tasks to complete. Job One was coordination, especially since half of the girls began attending the new Piney Orchard Elementary in September 2000.

"It was quite a lesson in coordination and collaboration," says Unger, who continued with the project despite her own move to Manor View Elementary. "It took the hard work of everybody working together: students, principals, teachers, GT teachers, parents, and businesses."

Girls met periodically during evening meetings at Waugh Chapel. Teachers started a phone and E-mail tree with NASA. Parents produced a newsletter, initiated fundraisers with area businesses, made flyers, carpooled students to the State House for an awards recognition ceremony, chaperoned the trip, even planned a celebration banquet in Florida.

"Never before have I seen such a level of enthusiasm maintained over such a long time," says Stoll. "It reaffirmed the fact that there's no 'I' in the word 'Teamwork!'"

In May 2001, students, teachers, administrators, and parents assembled to open the test tubes that housed the experiments in space. Student Rachel Pietkiewicz summed it up in scientific fashion: "It was like the whole monarch migration was in my stomach."

Linda Stoll's observation: "It just goes to show that there's no distinction between genders in space." ✔

—Michelle Y. Green

For more: Visit www.wff.nasa.gov/~sspp/sem/sem.html.

[DILEMMA]

How do you handle chronic tardiness?

Last year I had a seventh grader who was chronically tardy. Detention didn't work. I started having him call his mom at work every time he was tardy. I figured that if he was going to interrupt my class, he could interrupt his mom at work. She wasn't too happy, but at least she knew how often this was happening. His tardiness didn't end, but it did improve.

Cathie Fenger
Seventh grade language arts
Marshall, Minnesota

■ At the beginning of each quarter, students in my computer classes create a time card for themselves. Each day, they record their attendance, just as one would at a job. Each class period counts four hours. On Fridays, the information is transferred to a spreadsheet representing a payroll register. Formulas are put into the register to calculate total hours for the week, gross pay, deductions, and net pay. Since part-time workers rarely receive benefits, there's no pay for snow days, vacations, sick days, doctor's appointments.

There's also a deduction of one to four hours for tardiness.

At the end of the quarter, students who have earned the most pay receive valuable bonus points. Students quickly learn that being late or absent doesn't pay.

Wanda Samson
Business teacher
Fremont, Nebraska

Ted Pitts

■ I've never had a problem with tardies since instituting the singing rule. If you're tardy, you sing a simple song in front of the class. It's amazing to see how fast students run to class. We've had singers from the captain of the football team to a board of education member. I even had to sing once when I was caught up in the hall with another teacher. If you set the rules, you must live by them.

Crissy Lauterbach
History teacher
Kettering, Ohio

■ I approach chronic tardiness as a family problem and work with parents and the child in a "partner" approach. I record chronic late arrivals and call a conference where I share the data, express my concern, and ask for their help. Many parents aren't aware of how many times their child is late.

I give "I" messages rather than place blame. I detail what we do in the first 30 minutes of school and how that organizational time is important. If there's evidence that the tardiness is negatively impacting grades or learning, I present this as well. As the situation improves, I send notes home expressing the improvement and appreciation for their efforts.

Jan Formisano
Multi-age class, second/third grades
Mercer Island School District, Washington

■ A student who is late will find my door locked. This leaves the student in the hall for administrators and hall monitors to pick up. It also forces the student to get a pass from other teachers who may be sending them late.

Zeanah Leasure
Science teacher
Hollywood, Florida

■ To curb tardies, my high school staff created a system based on a graduated set of consequences:

1st occurrence: Teacher writes referral.

2nd: Lunch detention (served within 24 hours).

3rd: Saturday school (served the following Saturday).

4th: "Community" service (after school/in-building chores).

5th: Student suspended for one or more days.

A student's failure to serve any of these consequences automatically results in an acceleration to the next level.

Sherrie McDowell
English teacher
Cheyenne, Wyoming

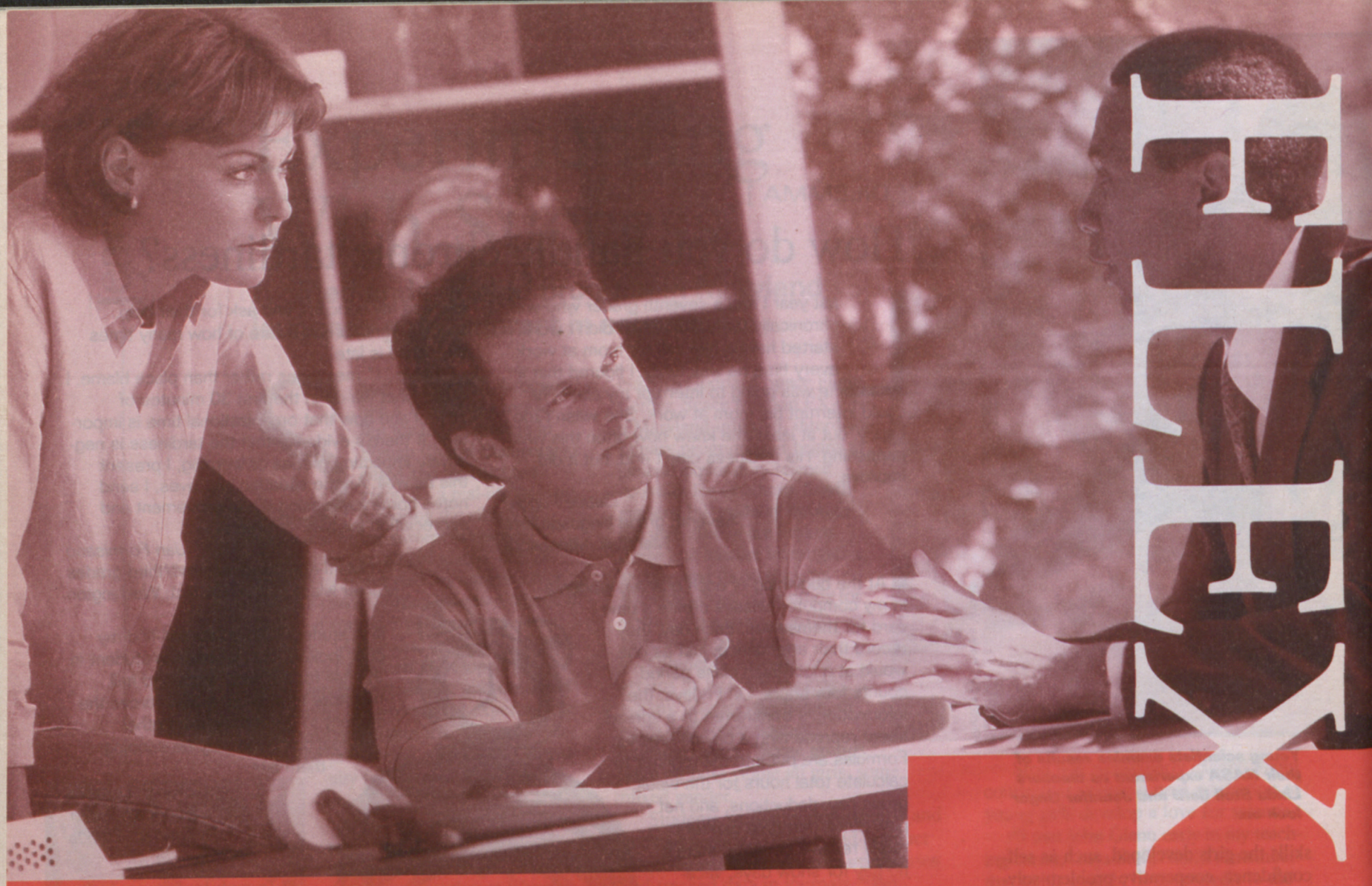
Got an Answer?

How do you cut a student from a sports team—or any kind of team?

E-mail your answer to dilemma2@neatoday.nea.org. Or send by regular mail, or fax to 202/822-7206. Please include your name, city, state, and job title. Published respondents will receive an *NEA Today* mug!

"Real Teachers . . . remember that they were once real kids."

— Ellen Hayes, eighth grade math teacher, Clinton, Iowa



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The Play's the Thing

Culturally relevant scripts, based on favorite books, help English language learners in Austin, Texas.

José the Wolf couldn't huff and puff his way past the adobe house built by Miguel, the smart little pig. But he's blowing down barriers to literacy as a character acted out in Laura May's fourth grade classroom.

Readers' Theatre uses culturally relevant texts—from contemporary poetry to fractured fairy tales—to help students transition to second language reading.

"I turn manageable texts into scripts for students to perform," explains May, a bilingual English teacher of Hispanic fourth graders in Austin, Texas. "Each day I model reading, teach a mini-lesson, then divide the class into repertory groups to work on reading strategies."

Students perform for classmates.

In groups based on ability and language, students focus on the story and its characters. They repeatedly read scripts with members of their small groups. They rehearse and prepare to perform for their classmates. And because each of the five groups gets a different script a day apart, everyone benefits from the repetition of daily performances.

"I was able to use this as my primary reading program for two years," says May. "Because students stay with one meaningful script for an entire week, they're learning English."

Readers' Theatre is part of a larger research project initiated in 2000 by Nancy Roser, professor of education at the University of Texas at Austin. The project seeks to measure what effect practice in culturally relevant texts has on fluency and reading levels. It also examines the effect of repeated reading—and time spent talking about what's been read—on comprehension.

Early test results garnered Readers' Theatre rave reviews: After only six weeks, May's students showed significant increases in reading levels and words per minute, coupled with a greater willingness to read and write. And there are lots of things kids got from it that we don't even realize, says May.

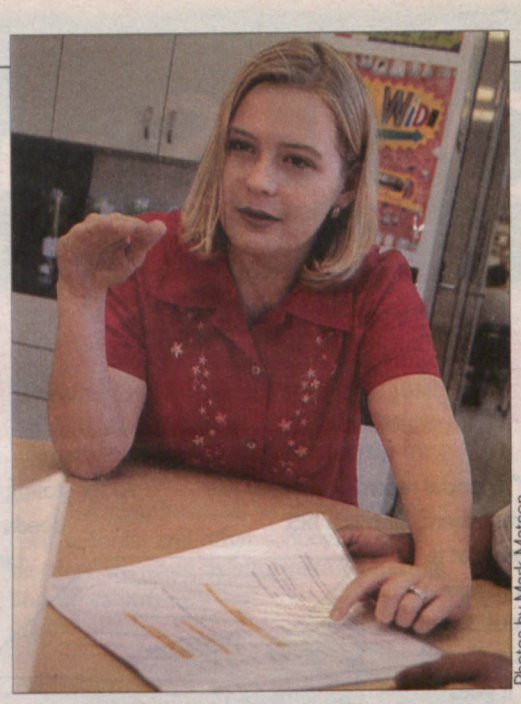
"Many students identify personally with characters in a story," she says, recalling one child's poignant response to "My Name is Jorge on Both Sides of the River," a poem by Jane Medina.

"When I'm here, I miss Mexico," the student shared, "and when I'm there, I miss here."

May is convinced that any student struggling with fluency can be helped by this approach.

"The lasting effects," she says, "are ones we can be proud of." ✔

—Michelle Y. Green



Photos by Mark Matson

Laura May creates Readers' Theatre scripts with a cultural connection.

For more: E-mail lmay105103@aol.com

Too Much Fun for Just One Day!

With March 2, 2002 on a Saturday, NEA's official Read Across America Day will be held Friday, March 1. But readers of all ages are welcome to celebrate on March 1, March 2—or both! That's not all: While traditional "reading parties" will take place at the beginning of March, NEA will be working with our national Read Across America partners to offer programs and activities throughout the year to build momentum toward the best-ever Read Across America. For year-round reading ideas, a calendar, resources, and more, log on to our revamped, content-focused Web site at www.nea.org/read across.

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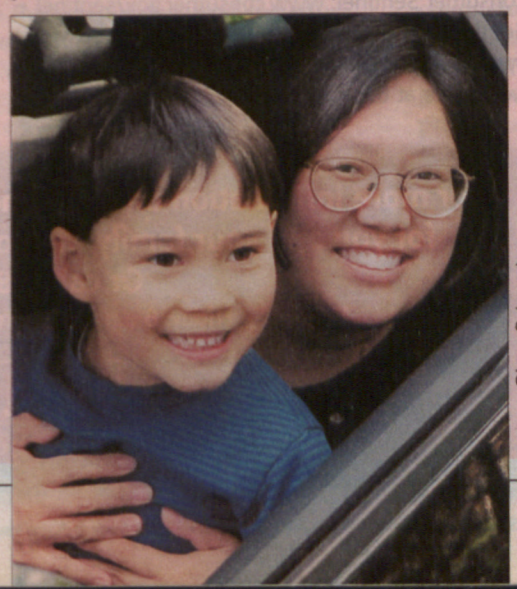
HOW TO... MAKE A FRESH START THIS SCHOOL YEAR

Janet Wong, whose award-winning poetry and picture books include *This Next New Year* (Farrar, Straus, Giroux), celebrates a new beginning on January 1, the Lunar New Year, and the first day of school. Kick off your new school year with these fresh ideas, borrowed from Chinese tradition.

Make room for good luck by cleaning. Traditional Chinese people clean their homes for weeks prior to the New Year; if you want good luck to come in, you need to get rid of the bad. Banish clutter to let the kids know that this will be a clean room and a lucky year. Write about their biggest problems of the past—procrastination, for example—using a bar of soap on the board or countertops. Let kids fingerpaint in suds on their desks, writing about their weaknesses or fears. Then sponge up the bad, and make it disappear.

Hang lucky scrolls. Traditional Chinese people hang "lucky couplets," written in Chinese characters, to fill their homes with positive thoughts. Use your own made-up pictographic symbols to remind you of your personal goals for the year. They may be as simple as "breathe," "stand tall," "drink more water," and "make time for bathroom breaks"—or as lofty as "patience," "compassion," and "listen to what is not said."



Glenn Schroeder

Celebrate your knowledge. Chinese people give red envelopes to bring luck. Usually these envelopes contain money, but knowledge is an equally powerful currency. Stuff envelopes with odd and fun facts—"teasers" for what your students will learn this year or interesting facts about you. Then ask students to trade.

Say only good things. My mother used to tell me that my whole year could be ruined if I said bad things on the New Year. This next new school year, think positive: this will be the best year ever.

For more: Visit www.janetwong.com.

Focus on Finance

Information and helpful tips on managing your money – brought to you by NEA Member Benefits.

The Paper Chase

How Long and Where to Store those Papers

All those "important" financial records can really pile up, but before you trash them, let these IRS rules help you decide what to keep. Routine audits require records for the previous 3 years, unless income was significantly underreported, then it goes up to 6 years. However, with fraud, there's no time limit. Also, you should hold onto your tax returns for 7 years.

Another rule of thumb: the more complex your financial affairs, the longer you should keep records. Save records of home improvements until you sell, because they can help lower (or eliminate) capital gains tax.

As for storing documents, get a safe deposit box for: deeds, titles, marriage licenses, divorce decrees, birth certificates, home inventory, Social Security cards, stock certificates, and a list of your bank and brokerage accounts, CDs, and credit cards (include account numbers and branch locations).

At home, keep a copy of this same list, along with insurance policies, passports, tax returns, wills, trusts, power of attorney, medical directives, funeral and burial instructions, and anything you want to access easily. For safety, store them in a fire-retardant safe.

One last thing: tell your loved ones where you keep this stuff!

Protect your property from a tax hit.

By now, you've probably received your property tax assessment in the mail. You might want to examine it with a fine tooth comb, because the National Tax Payers Union estimates that 60% of residential property is over-assessed. If you suspect your home is, then double check the acreage and make sure the correct building type for your property was noted. If the information is correct but you still feel the amount is too high, you can appeal your assessment with the tax assessors' office in your city or town.

You can help your case by comparing the sales price of your home with the sales prices of comparable homes in your neighborhood by visiting your local tax office. This information is public, and you can specifically request the amount of taxes paid on requested neighboring properties. If the sales prices of these homes are lower than the sales price of your home, this could help your case. Other helpful hints might be to make a list of insect or structural problems and to find out the date of your last tax assessment. A little research could save you a lot.

Check out this deal!

Whether space adventure or genealogy is your bag, take advantage of this FREE software offer from NEA Member Benefits. Choose from popular titles like Joy of Cooking, Web Studio or others that might suit you. To look at our selection today, visit www.neamb.com/emailoffer.html

Travel the World at a Discount

If you love to travel, you should get an International Teacher Identity Card (ITIC) before you plan your next trip. This internationally recognized teacher ID card gives you great discounts all over the world on airfare, hotels, transportation, and much, much more. Get yours by visiting: www.counciltravel.com

Net worth

government site sightings

Gov't bonds: www.savingsbonds.gov/ols/olshome.htm – Skip the bank lines and buy government bonds the convenient way online.

SEC: www.sec.gov/mfcc/mfcc-int.htm – Features a Mutual Fund Cost Calculator that enables you to quickly estimate and compare what mutual fund expenses will cost you.

Consumer Sentinel: www.consumer.gov/sentinel – Get the facts on consumer frauds and report your own fraud complaints to law enforcement officials worldwide at this site.

Three basic steps to annuities

Annuities help secure a happy retirement with additional income and tax-deferred growth on your investments. Here's how they work...

Step 1 is to deposit money into an account and decide whether you'd like to make a one-time deposit with a *single premium policy*, or add on to your account at different times with a *periodic premium policy* (i.e. through payroll deferral).

Step 2 is to choose whether you'd like the insurance company to handle your investment (fixed program), or take an active role in how your funds are invested (variable program).

Step 3 is the fun part. When your annuities come due, you can either be paid in large amounts for a shorter time or small amounts for a longer time.

Remember, it's never too late – and you're never too young – to prepare for your retirement with annuities.

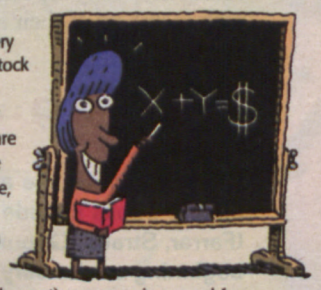
Test your I.Q.

(Investor Quotient)

Take this quick quiz and see how well you understand some important investment concepts. The answers include an explanation guaranteed to give your I.Q. a boost.

1. "Dollar cost averaging" refers to **A)** an investment strategy whereby you invest a fixed amount every month; **B)** the practice of rounding off dividends to the nearest dollar; **C)** a tax computation on interest income.
2. Medigap coverage is **A)** medical insurance for people who are over 55 but not old enough to be eligible for Medicare; **B)** medical insurance for people who don't qualify for Medicare because of their income; **C)** supplemental medical insurance for Medicare recipients to cover costs Medicare doesn't cover.
3. Asset allocation refers to **A)** the distribution of your estate to heirs; **B)** diversification of an investment portfolio; **C)** a one-time fee levied by investment firms on investors' assets.

Answers:



1. **A.** Investing a fixed amount every month, regardless of how the stock market performs, means when stock prices are higher, you buy fewer shares and when prices are lower, you buy more. But since shares generally go up over time, you should end up with shares that are worth much more than you originally paid.
2. **C.** Medigap (or Medicare Supplement) coverage is named for the fact that it covers the "gap" between what the government-sponsored Medicare program typically pays (usually 80% of your medical bill) and the total payment you owe.
3. **B.** Diversifying your investment portfolio means mixing stocks with more conservative options, such as bonds and cash. This method of asset allocation helps balance risk.

For more information on investment strategies and financial services for you and your family, visit our Web Site at www.neamb.com
Or call 1-800-637-4636

Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (or Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.) ET

nea Member Benefits
www.neamb.com

Sources: *Smart Money*, February 2001. *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Buying Insurance and Annuities*. ©1996. *The Consumer Reports Money Book*, ©2000.

AVNT0901

Children's Health Insurance: Available, But Unused

In 1997, Congress created the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to provide coverage to uninsured kids whose parents earn too much to qualify for Medicaid. But four years after CHIP's passage, the number of uninsured children in the United States remains at crisis levels. Millions have no insurance, and experts say lack of information about who qualifies for CHIP is the main reason. Recent changes in the law make it possible for public school educators to play a key role in getting insurance coverage for their children.

Why was CHIP created?

In 1997, there were 11 million children in the United States without health insurance.

The federal government estimated that half of these kids came from families who earned too much to qualify for Medicaid, but who nevertheless could not afford private health insurance.

The CHIP legislation's co-sponsors, Senators Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), crafted the program to close this gap, hoping CHIP would cover half of the nation's uninsured kids.

Who's eligible?

Because the program is administered by individual states, eligibility varies. But in most states, families earning up to $35,000 a year (based on a four-member family) can qualify for CHIP.

State-by-state information on eligibility and benefits is available online from the Washington, DC-based nonprofit Children's Defense Fund at www.childrensdefense.org/signthemuphealthy.htm.

Has CHIP been successful?

Partly. During the first three years of the program, 2.5 million children were enrolled.

But this is far short of the federal and state governments' goal. Today, 11 million U.S. kids remain uninsured—the same number as in 1997.

As fast as children sign up for CHIP, other children lose their health insurance. That's because states are pushing families off welfare, and many people are not told when they leave welfare that they are still eligible for Medicaid.

Most of the jobs that former welfare recipients are taking do not provide health insurance.

The latest figures say that one in every seven children in America has no health insurance.

Those without coverage include 29 percent of American Indian children, 28 percent of Hispanic children, 18 percent of Black children, 17 percent of Asian children, and nine percent of white children.

An estimated six million of America's uninsured children are eligible for CHIP or Medicaid.

Why aren't more kids enrolled?

According to Bill England of the Children's Defense Fund, "The number one reason is that their parents don't know they're eligible.

"Through surveys and focus groups, we've found that, nationally, six out of every 10 parents whose children are eligible for either CHIP or Medicaid don't believe that the programs apply to them.

"There is a devastating lack of awareness out there about CHIP."

What's being done to make parents more aware of CHIP?

Last year, there was a big breakthrough in outreach. Congress passed legislation that—with families' consent—allows school lunch programs and the Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC) to share information with CHIP and Medicaid, linking up their outreach efforts.

Since the overlap in eligibility for these programs is vast, large numbers of kids who qualify for CHIP can now be identified through this inter-agency sharing of financial data.

How do schools play a part in this effort?

According to Bill England, "Schools now have a vital role in improving outreach to parents eligible for CHIP."

Because income information from applications for free or reduced-cost lunches may now, with consent, be shared with CHIP and Medicaid, school districts across the nation have the potential to direct millions of eligible kids to these programs. And the effort is already under way.

In Minneapolis, for example, if parents apply for free or discounted school lunches for their kids, these kids will automatically be enrolled as well in CHIP—unless a parent specifically declines insurance.

England believes that "schools may become the most important resource we have for getting kids the health coverage they need."

Can individual educators help?

Absolutely. As England points out, "Parents look to school staff, not just for education, but for any help they can get in ensuring the well-being of their children."

NEA members can work to get their own schools, and other schools in their districts, involved in information-sharing and other outreach efforts.

• Almost 11,000,000 U.S. children are uninsured.
• Of these, more than 6,000,000 are eligible for, but not enrolled in, CHIP or Medicaid.
• #1 reason kids aren't enrolled: Their parents don't know they're eligible.
Source: Children's Defense Fund
Nikki Middendorf

They can also provide invaluable assistance to parents who don't know if they're eligible for insurance.

To assist teachers in such efforts, the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration has produced *Healthy Kids Are Ready To Learn: Promoting Health Insurance for Your Students,* a comprehensive guide to how schools and school employees can work with agencies, organizations, and families to get kids enrolled in health insurance programs.

It's available online at www.ask. hrsa.gov or toll free from HRSA at 888/ASK-HRSA (888/275-4772). ✔

—Matt Simon

For More: Go to www.childrensdefense.org/signthemuphealthy.htm. At the U.S. map, click on your state.

TEAMWORK

Tales of Two Locals In the Grand Canyon State

Photos by John Miller

First contracts take work, but payoff is great.

Cave Creek, Arizona bus driver Sherry Thompson heads the new ESP local Association that recently bargained its first contract.

It's no small task, building a new local. Folks in two new locals in Arizona can tell you that—but they'll also tell you the long-term benefits are worth the struggle.

"We've had a long haul just getting to the place where we could talk to the district," says Sherry Thompson, president of the new support staff unit in Cave Creek, Arizona.

"Last year we were told the administration and school board didn't want to talk to us," Thompson notes. "They didn't have to even consider us because we weren't organized. We assured them we were, and proved it by getting almost 100 percent signed signature cards from staff saying they wanted us to represent them."

Association membership among both certified and classified employees in the Peoria school system has grown, notes classroom teacher Kathy Evans.

The board got the message and formally recognized the 50-member Support Staff Cave Creek last year, and the group settled its first contract with the district in May.

Major benefits include a raise of at least 5 percent for most members and a professional growth plan to be put in place for the 2002-03 school year. Union members will also work with the district to revise the "Classified Handbook."

According to Thompson, a few older employees were negative at first about unionizing. But, she adds, "As a whole, we are going uphill now at a steady pace. New employees seem happy that we went to bat for them."

Thompson says, "Staff members who had been there awhile had a wait-and-see attitude. When people started seeing improvements with how we were treated by the administrators and that we were trying to work together, they wanted to be part of the group that makes a difference."

This wasn't the first time that the classified employees had tried to organize. But earlier efforts failed to get off the ground. This time, Thompson says, "We let the people know we had the teachers' backing. And our NEA UniServ director helped us."

While they've been organized longer, the certified and classified employees in Arizona's Peoria Education Association—the fourth largest in the state—dealt with many of the same problems as support staff and teachers do in Cave Creek and elsewhere in the nation.

They basically had no bargaining power and weren't recognized as a unit. But local Association President Kathy Evans says a recent sales tax proposition, which many viewed as detrimental to public education, helped organize people.

Frozen salaries in four recent years also helped employees realize a strong local Association could help. Membership in both the certified and classified positions has jumped dramatically.

The Association's executive board has meanwhile been building its reputation within the district and community. It has created a school board contact team as well as government relations, political action, and public relations vice-president positions.

Evans credits the success that her local has met with to Arizona Education Association as well as a strong core of dynamic local people who both work in and support the local schools. Solidarity has been high—400 people in purple shirts showed up for a late-May school board meeting.

"We have a lot of spit and polish in this district," says Evans, "and we go above and beyond for students." ✔

Going the Extra Mile

NEA's ESP membership continues to grow. In 2000-01, membership roles grew by 24,700 members to nearly 333,600.

The higher number means one more ESP seat has been added to the NEA Board of Directors.

Al Perez, NEA's associate director of Affiliate Capacity Building in charge of the ESP program, says the growth is directly attributable to "organizational efforts made at the state level."

More members means more folks who are going the extra mile, including . . .

Raul Vasquez says he's slowing down on his activities a bit, now that his children are grown.

Most of us would say this Salem-Keizer, Oregon, special education instructional assistant still has his hands full. Last spring he won the local Ed Elliot Human Rights Award for making a sustained contribution to human and civil rights.

Vasquez received the honor for his long history of volunteerism on behalf of Hispanic youth.

He began his career in education in 1974. Since then he worked in the areas of bilingual, migrant, and special education. Throughout those years he served on the city council and other committees involving cultural issues and public relations.

Vasquez has devoted much of his effort to involving Hispanics in city government and in being part of their city.

That's not all. Vasquez begins his fourth year on the executive committee of the Salem-Keizer Association of Classified Employees and he's served as a delegate

TEAM PLAYER

Job List That Never Ends

Name: Tammy McBride

Job Title: Bus driver, Hoffman, North Carolina

Background: During her junior year in high school 19 years ago, Tammy McBride began her employment in the field of education. In those days, you could drive a school bus in North Carolina while still attending school. So for two years, she went to class and drove a bus.

After graduating, she kept on bus driving while also going to Richmond Technical College in Hamlet, North Carolina. Over the years, she's driven a bus for all levels—elementary, junior high, and high school—near the golfing Mecca of Pinehurst.

Current school positions: First grade teacher assistant, after-school tutorial bus driver, summer school assistant and bus driver, safety committee chairperson, boys' basketball coach for ages 8-11. She's also the PTA vice-president.

Current community positions: Derby Volunteer Fire Department firefighter and secretary, emergency medical technician.

How she does all this? "Having my husband's family nearby helps, but I'm also a very outgoing person who's got to have something to do to keep busy.

"Many of my jobs are voluntary, except the driving and teaching assistant positions. I've been with the fire department for 11 years, and I've attained the highest rank below the instructor level.

"We have two children ages 11 and 8, and I have a routine that I follow. I get up at 5 a.m. to start my day and get my children ready. It all balances out. It can get stressful at times. But after you've done it for so long, it's like anything else you would do.

"I definitely know the value of teamwork, and working with kids is the favorite part of all my jobs.

"I'm only 35 and I'm still looking to the future. I would like to one day get more involved in children's lives. I'd like to be able to catch the behavior or learning disability problems early so they won't have to struggle in upper grades." ✔

Brian Thorpe

School bus driver/firefighter Tammy McBride fills every waking hour with activities involving family, school, and community.

RESOURCES

Food Service Specials
National School Lunch Week this year runs from October 15-19. For details, visit the Web site of the American School Food Service Association at www.asfsa.org. The site has information about the new labeling guidelines for food allergens, links to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and occasionally chats for food service workers.

Health News To Use
School nurses and other public health employees may find the Web site of the American Medical Association a useful tool. Tour the archives of the *Journal of the AMA* for articles and news summaries. Search functions prove helpful for finding information and links on everything from tobacco to asthma. Go to www.ama-assn.org/.

More Health News
If the AMA doesn't have what you're looking for, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention might. The list of conditions and diseases by itself is mind-boggling. Or check out the list of networks and other resources and Web sites at www.cdc.gov/. A full Spanish version of the site is available, too.

Great Para Resource
The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services offers a fine site focused on the work of paraprofessionals. Articles and information, training materials, and other resources are available at www.nrcpara.org/. Another useful site: www.usc.edu/dept/education/CMMR/Clearinghouse.html, from the National Clearinghouse for Paraeducator Resources.

Bus Drivers Park Here
Information, sometimes with a colorful twist, by and for school bus drivers, is available at user.mc.net/~hyden/. Great graphics of school buses and other art are available online. There are some really "far out buses" to look at and a survey to take, not to mention information on seat belts, railroad crossings, repetitive stress injuries, and more.

to the Oregon and the NEA Representative Assemblies.

The Minority Affairs Committee and the Legal Defense Program of the Oregon Education Association are also beneficiaries of Vasquez's dedication.

So much for slowing down. . . .

Iowa middle school secretary **Janis Schultz** devotes herself to students, during and after school.

Her 20-year career with the West Delaware district in northeast Iowa keeps her busy in school handling attendance and clerical duties, tracking student discipline and going "above and beyond" in daily interactions with students, parents and community members.

Schultz also shares her love of horses with students by helping with the annual fifth grade outdoor education camp.

She teaches the kids about riding and horses and brings her lessons to life by having them ride their own horses.

That's not all. This Midwestern dynamo and her husband, Dave, are both active Iowa State Education Association members.

Schultz was instrumental in organizing the West Delaware Education Support Association and has served as president, vice-president, and negotiator, not to mention membership recruiter.

Schultz even produces *The Support Report* newsletter.

In recognition of all her contributions, Schultz received the ISEA ESP Award last school year. ✔

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(18-month term as of 7/2/01)

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(18-month term)

Chase Bank, TX
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Or visit www.neamb.com

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*Annual Percentage Yield (APY) for the NEA-Sponsored GoldCertificate CD is valid from 7/2/01 through 7/8/01, based on a $1,000 minimum opening deposit, a term of 18 months, and assumes that interest remains in the account until maturity. Penalty may be imposed for early withdrawal of CD principal. Withdrawals and fees may reduce earnings.

**All other bank APYs shown in the comparison chart are valid as of 7/2/01, based on a $2,500 minimum opening deposit and a term of 18 months. Source – *Informa Research Services,* 7/2/01.

†Eligible NEA family members include parents, spouse (or domestic partner) and children.

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CDNT0901

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A Site Worth Seeing

Netscape: Mills Lawn in Space
Mills Lawn Elementary School
Yellow Springs, Ohio
Project MISSE
Mills Lawn in Space!
The laser communication device created during the Laser Residency with Dr. Grote, from the Air Force Research Laboratory at WPAFB, was selected by NASA to become part of Project MISSE. This project places self-contained experiments aboard shuttle missions and the International Space Station. Mills Lawn Elementary has three experiments in this program:
Up and Down - One laser will travel to ISS on a shuttle and return to earth on the same mission
1 Year - One laser will go to ISS and sit exposed to the environment for one year
3 Year - One laser will go to ISS and sit exposed to the environment for three years
The students at Mills Lawn will monitor control lasers over this three year period. They will gather data on the effect the space environment has on the degradation of the laser's power output as each laser returns to Earth. They will provide NASA with a culminating report in three and a half years. Students are following the construction of ISS and monitoring the progress of international teamwork.
Our experiments will travel to ISS on the August 5, 2001, 7:05 P.M. shuttle launch, STS-105. Mills Lawn students are excited about visiting Kennedy Space Center to watch their experiment blast off into space.

Don Nowak picks Mills Lawn's site for its resources for parents and its showcase of students' work.

Guidance for Parents

There's a terrific elementary school site, featuring a National School of Excellence. This site has four purposes: *promotion* (it keeps the school in the public eye in a very positive way); *information* (it provides students, parents, and teachers with information they need to know about school events and happenings); *communication* (it provides an easy way for the public to communicate with school staff via e-mail); and *instruction* (it provides numerous online instructional opportunities for students and an opportunity for them to showcase their work.) Go to: www.yellow-springs.k12.oh.us/ys-mls.

Don Nowak
dnowak@donet.com
Mills Lawn Elementary School
Yellow Springs, Ohio

TALK TO US

Have a nifty classroom tip or lesson plan that uses technology? E-mail a description (under 200 words, please!) to wired-classroom@list.nea.org.

Is there a Web site, CD-ROM, or piece of software you can't live without? E-mail your favorites—and why you love them—to myfavoritetech@list.nea.org.

Or send your responses by regular mail to *NEA Today*, or by Fax to 202/822-7206, or through the Web at www.nea.org/cet.

Those published here will receive a sparkling *NEA Today* mug!

Revolutionary Idea

It's easy to use your classroom Web site as an instructional tool through links, student polls, and online quizzes!

For example, we are currently focusing on the Revolutionary War in our social studies curriculum. We dedicated part of our home page (myschool online.com/pa/murphy) to this topic by placing a picture of General Washington's headquarters that links us directly to the Valley Forge National Park Web site (www.nps.gov/vafo/index.htm).

Above the picture there is an online poll (free from alxnet.com) asking students what activities they would prefer to participate in during our Valley Forge National Park field trip. The fifth grade teachers will use the results to determine our field trip itinerary.

There's also an online quiz (also free, from funbrain.com) that each student will take. Sound good? Well, it gets even better! The quiz results are forwarded right to the teacher via E-mail!

Theresa Murphy
TMURPHY@pgsd.org
Lower Pottsgrove Elementary School
Pottstown, Pennsylvania

Something for Everyone

My favorite site happens to be mine: Teaching is a work of heart, www.geocities.com/athens/thebes/9893.It's an online file cabinet for teachers that is filled with ideas for all subject areas, bulletin board ideas, units, links, leveled book lists, holiday activities, teacher humor, and so much more for the K-4 teacher. There is something for everyone here!

Colleen Gallagher
K-3 special education teacher
colleeng@cksd.wednet.edu
Silverdale, Washington

Virtual Canoe Trip

We would like to invite you and your students to go canoeing with our class. You would be joining us online, so you wouldn't have to worry about paddling in rain.

This fall, we are beginning the school year by studying rivers. We will incorporate rivers into math, science, and computers.

Later in the year, my students will put me in a canoe. I will E-mail them the daily test data of our rivers health and my adventures. For more info, or to join us, visit: www.msdwc.k12.in.us/ses/rivindex.htm.

Richard Beamer
rbeamer@msdwc.k12.in.us
Southwood Elementary
Wabash, Indiana

My favorite Web site

I worked with two other teachers at my school to create a Web site that supports teachers with a set of on-line tools that we designed and programmed ourselves. We are trying to create a peer support network, among other things. Check our site out at http://teachwise.com.

Steve Gendreau
Rogers High School
Puyallup, Washington

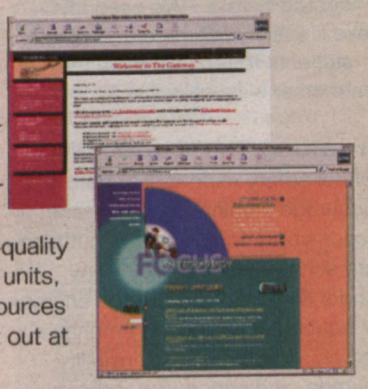
Bytes for Beginners

What is the best tool for locating quality education resources on the Web?

There's so much out there, and trying to sift through it all using Yahoo or Excite (or another search engine) just takes way too much time!

The capability of many popular Web search tools to consistently serve up quality education resources is limited, at best, and requires the use of at least a basic set of "cyber-sleuthing" skills. One of the best tools for finding useful, valuable resources on the Web is . . . *NEA Today*.

Why? Because every Web site featured on this page comes from educators like you. What better source for an education resource recommendation than a colleague? Your contributions of resource URLs and descriptions to *NEA Today* through www.nea.org/technology/favorite.html are invaluable to colleagues who peruse this page every month for tips and ideas about where on the Web to find the very best in education resources.



There are other sources for quality education resources that you should consider. For example Gateway to Educational Materials, or GEM, is a one-stop, any-stop access to high-quality lesson plans, curriculum units, and other education resources on the Internet. Check it out at www.thegateway.org.

Breaking the Code of Silence

Students, their network of friends, and trusted adults can be the first line of defense in keeping schools safe. But how can educators persuade students to break the code of silence and tell them of threats? What preventive measures can help ward off potentially lethal situations? NEA staffer Becky Fleischauer shares advice from school safety experts who know.

Sergey Ivanov

A hotline tip in Hoyt, Kansas resulted in the arrest of three heavily armed students prepared to take their artillery into school. Law enforcement officials confiscated a semiautomatic rifle and bomb-making materials.

An Elmira, New York student passed along a note to a teacher warning of school violence. Police later caught a student in the cafeteria armed with a revolver, a sawed-off shotgun, ammunition rounds, a duffel bag containing pipe bombs, and a propane bomb.

A student in Twenty-nine Palms, California alerted school officials about two troubled 17-year old classmates who had targeted 16 potential victims for violence. The plan was squelched, and all were kept safe.

These stories don't always make headlines, but they speak volumes about a powerful force in keeping schools safe—responsive communication and an atmosphere of trust between students and adults.

Data show that peers often are the first to know when potential harm is brewing. A recent Secret Service study disclosed that three-fourths of school shooters told some of their classmates about their plans. The U.S. Department of Education reported that out of the 6,000-plus handguns confiscated on school grounds during the 1996-97 school year, 92 percent of the cases were the result of students alerting school officials.

Yet fear, a code of loyalty, and a reluctance to "rat" on their friends often prevent students from telling an adult and getting help.

"Our schools and communities must do everything they can to break this adolescent code of silence," says Wolfgang Halbig, president of the National Institute for School and Workplace Safety. "We need to make it easier, and more acceptable, for students to report threats they've heard other kids make."

Breaking the Code

School safety experts like Halbig encourage administrators to take responsibility for creating a nuturing, safe school atmosphere. Many school districts have started character education programs, emphasizing values such as responsibility, courage, and caring. But if these programs do not also emphasize the importance of breaking the code of silence, says Halbig, they are missing a golden opportunity.

"You can put as many metal detectors in your schools as you want, but until you have most students working on your behalf, you have a false sense of security," he notes.

What can be done to encourage students to speak up? Halbig, a former teacher and state trooper, suggests that schools:

■ Set up an easy-to-use, anonymous reporting system. A 24-hour, seven-days-a-week telephone hotline for students and parents can be a critical source of information about potential danger in or near school. Enlist business and community support to aggressively promote the hotline both in and out of school. Post student-made posters in hallways and rooms. Make sure materials clearly state that all calls are confidential.

■ Solicit students' insight. Invite student participation through surveys, discussion groups, suggestion boxes, and by involving the student council and mentoring programs.

■ Adopt an established protocol so students and staff know exactly how to respond to reports of potential violence. Hold regular discussions about the school discipline code. Make safety and security a topic for a parent open house. Ask students for a formal commitment to break the code of silence in order to prevent harm and save lives.

An Ounce of Prevention

While most schools only collect data about negative results—expulsions, threats, arrests, and injuries—tracking positive outcomes has produced change in Maryland's Montgomery County. Last year, in just four months, school officials reported more than 1,500 incidents of successful prevention and intervention efforts that helped students before anyone was hurt.

The entire focus, says Matt Kamins, supervisor of psychological services for Montgomery County Public Schools, is prevention first, intervention second.

"If we can identify kids who are having difficulty and convey to them that our expectation is that they are competent, capable individuals," says Kamins, "we can help them make better choices. It all starts with trust and a spirit of affirmation."

A student's connection to school is a powerful predictor for staying out of trouble, practicing good health and safety behaviors, and overall achievement, says Kamins. When a student is connected to an adult he or she trusts, and knows that adult will intervene with care and tangible assistance for a troubled classmate, that student will be more likely to tell.

"It's an approach that not only keeps schools safe," says Kamins, "it enhances learning."

Kamins applies this rule of thumb:

■ Do no harm. Find an intervention that is not harmful to the environment, family, school, or students.

■ Avoid stereotypes. Don't jump to conclusions based on popular culture archetypes like the "trenchcoat mafia" or "gangs." There are kids in every student group—jocks, brains, drama enthusiasts—who are fully capable of making good decisions.

■ Examine each incident in context. Explore what circumstances existed before the situation took place to determine what may have caused it.

Consider this example: In Lisbon, Ohio, a nine-year old student, desperately wanting to join his mother in jail, brought a gun to school. The boy was in the midst of waving the handgun in the air and threatening to shoot his classmates when his teacher stepped in and quietly reached out to him.

"I care a lot about you," she said. "We've been able to talk. Would you like to come into the hall and talk before you do anything?"

The boy walked up to her.

"Would you give me the gun?" the teacher asked.

He handed it over. Violence averted. ✔

RESOURCES

● Read NEA President Bob Chase's statement on encouraging better communication between teens and adults at www.nea.org/nr/nr010323.html.

● For safe schools resources and action steps for students, visit www.keepschoolssafe.org.

● Read "Safe from Harm: An Online Anthology of School Safety Resources," by Wolfgang Halbig, at www.asbj.com/security/contents/0300halbig.html.

CORRECTION:
The phone number for eGetgoing, an online treatment facility for substance abuse (www.eGetgoing.com), was inadvertently misprinted in the May 2001 issue of *NEA Today*. The correct number is 866/HELP-999. We regret the error.

Superheroes for Health

Real live heroes in Rossford, Ohio fight to promote healthy lifestyles through a district-wide newsletter that proclaims: Healthy Employees Run Our Schools.

They can't leap tall buildings in a single bound, and they don't wear tights and capes. But the HEROS of Rossford Exempted Village School District in Ohio are super serious about good health.

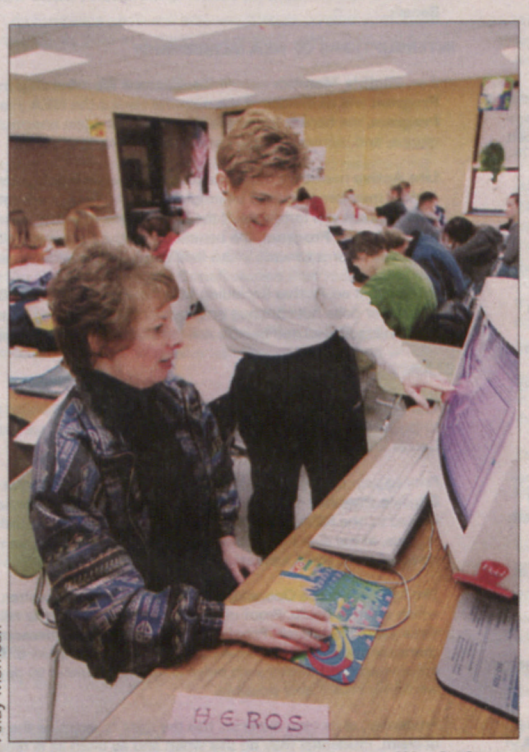
HEROS—Healthy Employees Run Our Schools—is the name of the district's 12-member health team whose mission is to promote staff wellness. Composed of teachers, support staff, and administrators, these health crusaders inform and motivate colleagues to lose weight, keep fit, and adopt a healthy lifestyle.

"One of the first things we did was create a district-wide newsletter to promote healthy life choices," says editor Valerie Washeck, American literature teacher and chair of Rossford High's English department. "The district nurse gives me articles. Staff members contribute recipes, personal testimonies, and fitness tips. And I glean information from other resources I've read," she says.

Each month, 250 to 300 issues of the one-page, back-to-back newsletter are produced on a shoestring—Washeck uses a simple computer template and makes copies on donated colored paper. Published now for two years, the newsletters are distributed once a month in employee paychecks.

"We encourage staff to make a contract with themselves," says Washeck. Readers are invited to submit a self-generated contract in which they commit to a healthy lifestyle change such as getting more sleep at night, drinking more water, or using their treadmill for more than a clothes hanger.

"Each person who submits a contract is entered into a monthly drawing to win movie tickets or a gift from a local establishment such as a health food store," says Washeck. At year's end, the HEROS team presents one lucky employee with the Healthy Choice award—a $100 gift certificate to a health spa or sporting goods store.



Andy Morrison

Valerie Washeck (left) and Jayne Werbylo help create the HEROS health newsletter.

Like most superheroes, Rossford's HEROS perform most of their good deeds behind the scenes. Meeting monthly during the school year, the HEROS team has developed a crisis plan for the district, drafted policy changes for selling candy in schools, and advocated for coordinated health programs in the state.

"Most people wouldn't know about the acronym HEROS," says Washeck, "but they'd know about the breast cancer information we provide and the health screenings we arrange."

Team members attend summer workshops and a yearly conference run by Ohio's State Planning Committee for Health Education, a statewide organization that promotes health and safety issues in schools. HEROS are trained on the components of a coordinated school health program, work on their own action program, and participate in team-building activities such as wilderness treks and tai chi.

"HEROS has really made a difference to the staff," insists Washeck, citing a recent newsletter article by the district's occupational therapist, Jayne Werbylo, who shared her weight-loss success along with a recipe for low-fat orange baked chicken.

"Jayne shed 30 pounds on her own and ran in the Boston Marathon for the first time that same year," says Washeck. "We're really proud of her." ✔

—Michelle Y. Green

BE A HERO, TOO

Try these super tips for staying healthy in the sun:

- Drink plenty of water to keep your body hydrated and prevent sun or heat stroke.
- Are you fair-skinned? Wear a wide-brimmed hat while outdoors.
- If you're sun sensitive, remain out of the sun between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., when the sun is its hottest.
- Protect your eyes from the sun's harmful rays by wearing sunglasses with UV protection.
- Wear sunscreen or sunblock with at least a 15 SPF to protect your skin.

For more, E-mail Valerie Washeck at rohs_vlw@nwoca.org for a sample contract.

Quick Tip

Sameta Rush

Ivars Mikelsons

Start off your next school year with these personal health standards offered by fourth grade teacher Sameta Rush, a competitive cyclist and triathlete at Strawberry Elementary in Steamboats Springs, Colorado.

Standard 1: Demonstrates a commitment to personal health and stress reduction through a variety of physical and relaxation activities.

Standard 2. Demonstrates the knowledge of factors important to participation in physical activities by maintaining an appropriate level of fitness and strength training with cardiovascular exercise.

Standard 3: Participates in regular physical fitness activities and demonstrates competency by possessing sufficient energy to enjoy active and productive lifestyles.

How did you score? Set goals and work for a healthier semester. E-mail **Sameta Rush** at srush@sailors.steamboat.k12.co.us

NEA HIN

From the **NEA Health Information Network**

■ New Asthma & Schools Web Site

Asthma accounts for at least 10 million missed school days each year. The NEA Health Information Network has launched an "Asthma & Schools" resource Web site, a simple, searchable database of educational materials, medical information, useful Web sites, and other resources for school personnel and parents.

Search for information, or submit a resource to the database, by visiting www.asthmaandschools.org.

■ Your Personal Health Calendar Now Available

Make a date for a healthier lifestyle with a copy of the NEA Health Information Network's 2001-02 "Your Personal Health Calendar." Based on the school year, the pocket calendar includes monthly reminder stickers for your breast self-exam, as well as information on cancer resources.

Get one for yourself, and order extras for friends, by completing the order form at www.neahin.org or by calling 800/718-8387.

■ Safe Schools Now Network Video Series

NEA's Safe Schools Now Network has completed its programming, but videos of the nine-part series are still available.

Each video presents model programs that address school safety and violence prevention and is accompanied by a discussion and resource guide.

VHS copies of the individual programs are available from the NEA Professional Library at $14.95 each for NEA members and $19.95 for nonmembers. Or order a complete set of all nine videos at the discounted rate of $115 for NEA members and $153 for nonmembers.

For descriptions of the programs, visit www.safeschoolsnow.org.

To order, call 800/229-4200, or order online at www.nea.org/books. Please allow seven to ten days for delivery.

NEA Dues-Tab

Summary Plan Description

This is to certify that, as an **Eligible Member** in good standing of the National Education Association (**"NEA"**), you are automatically covered under the **NEA DUES-TAB Program** (the **"Program"**). Coverage under the Program, as described herein, will remain in effect as long as the eligible class of **NEA** membership is retained and the overall **Program** remains in effect.

DESCRIPTION

THE **PROGRAM** IS A GROUP TERM LIFE AND ACCIDENTAL DEATH AND DISMEMBERMENT INSURANCE PROGRAM. IT IS PROVIDED BY THE **NEA MEMBERS INSURANCE TRUST** (**"NEA MIT"**) AT NO COST TO **ELIGIBLE MEMBERS** OF THE NEA.

NOTE: Terms that are in bold print are defined later in this Description under the section labeled "DEFINITIONS."

BENEFIT FUNDING AND ADMINISTRATION

The **Program** is provided through the **NEA MIT** (Employer Identification Number 521126682), and is underwritten by Prudential Financial (**"Prudential"**). The **Plan** number is 520. The **Plan Administrator** is **NEA**. **NEA**, however, has delegated specific administrative functions to **NEA's Member Benefits Corporation** (**"NEA's MBC"**) and to **Seabury & Smith, Inc.** (**"Seabury & Smith"**), the **Program's** administrator.

All assets of the **Plan**, including all insurance policies and reserves, are in a separate tax-exempt trust. A panel of independent trustees is responsible for the financial management of such assets. The members of the current Board of Trustees are: Dennis Van Roekel (Chairperson), Mary Lou Cameron, Robert H. Chanin, Chris Banks, and Judy L. Schaubach. The Trustees may be contacted c/o **NEA**, 1201 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036.

Insurance is provided under Prudential Group Policy No. G-37000.

The terms of the Group Policy that mainly affect the insurance are summarized in this Sample Certificate/Summary Plan Description. All benefits are subject in every way to the Group Policy. It and the NEA MIT Plan form the agreement under which payments are made. This Sample Certificate/Summary Plan Description replaces any previous descriptions you may have of the DUES-TAB Term Life and Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance. To the extent that the terms of the Group Policy differ from those in this Summary Plan Description, the terms of the Group Policy shall govern.

THE **NEA MIT** EXPECTS TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE THE **PROGRAM** FOR **ELIGIBLE MEMBERS** BUT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MODIFY OR TERMINATE IT AT ANY TIME.

BENEFITS

A benefit is payable in the event of the death or **Dismemberment** of an **Eligible Member**. The benefit is determined by (1) the amount of **NEA Dues** an **Eligible Member** has paid to the **NEA**, (2) the fact that the **Eligible Member** has held **Continuous Membership** in the **NEA**, (3) the cause of death or **Dismemberment**, and (4) membership classification.

Term Life Insurance Benefit. If death is due to natural causes, the benefit payable is the amount of **NEA Dues** the **Eligible Member** paid to the **NEA** for a period of **Continuous Membership**, commencing not earlier than in membership year 1981-82, up to a **Maximum Benefit** of $1,000.

Accidental Death Insurance Benefit. If death is caused by an **Accident** or **Assault**, the benefit payable is an amount equal to five times the amount of **NEA Dues** the **Eligible Member** paid to the **NEA** for a period of **Continuous Membership**, commencing not earlier than in membership year 1981-82, up to a **Maximum Benefit** of $5,000. The accidental death benefit does not cover any loss which results from suicide or attempt at suicide, or an intentionally self-inflicted injury, nor does it include disease, infirmity, infection (except for pyogenic infections occurring through and at the time of a cut or wound due to accident or assault), or medical or surgical treatment thereof.

If death is caused by an Accident or Assault which occurs while the **Eligible Member** is engaged in any activity which is in the express or implied terms of an **Eligible Member's Occupation** or occurs while the **Eligible Member** is acting on **Association Business** in the capacity of an **Association Leader**, the benefit payable is $50,000, instead of the benefits stated in the previous paragraph.

If death is caused by a **Homicide** which occurs while the **Eligible Member** is engaged in any activity which is in the express or implied terms of an **Eligible Member's Occupation**, the benefit payable is $150,000 instead of $50,000.

Accidental Dismemberment Insurance Benefit. In the event of a **Dismemberment** caused by an **Accident** or **Assault**, the benefit payable is an amount equal to five times the amount of **NEA Dues** the **Eligible Member** paid to the **NEA** for a period of **Continuous Membership**, commencing not earlier than in membership year 1981-82, up to a **Maximum Benefit** of $5,000. The accidental **Dismemberment** benefit does not cover any loss which results from suicide or attempt at suicide, or an intentionally self-inflicted injury, nor does it include disease, infirmity, infection (except for pyogenic infections occurring through and at the time of a cut or wound due to accident or assault), or medical or surgical treatment thereof.

In the event of **Dismemberment** caused by an **Accident** or **Assault** which occurs while the **Eligible Member** is engaged in any activity which is in the express or implied terms of an **Eligible Member's Occupation** or occurs while the **Eligible Member** is acting on **Association Business** in the capacity of an **Association Leader**, the benefit payable is $50,000, instead of the benefit stated in the previous paragraph.

PAYMENT OF BENEFITS

The Term Life Insurance Benefit is payable if you die while you are an **Eligible Member**. The Accidental Death and **Dismemberment** Insurance Benefits are payable if your death or **Dismemberment** is due to an **Accident** or **Assault** which happens while you are an **Eligible Member**. The benefits are payable when Prudential receives written proof of your death or **Dismemberment** and, in its sole discretion, determines that a benefit is payable. The Term Life and Accidental Death Insurance benefits are payable in one sum in accordance with the **Beneficiaries** section below. The Accidental Dismemberment Insurance Benefit is payable in one sum to you.

BENEFICIARIES

You have the right to choose a **Beneficiary**. If there is a **Beneficiary** for the insurance, the benefit is payable to that **Beneficiary**. Any amount of insurance for which there is no **Beneficiary** at your death will be payable to the first surviving class of the following classes of successive preference **Beneficiaries**: your (a) spouse; (b) surviving children; (c) surviving parents; (d) estate.

You may name a **Beneficiary** by contacting the NEA Insurance Operations Center. You may change the **Beneficiary** at any time without the consent of the present **Beneficiary**. The change will take effect on the date the information is received. But it will not apply to any amount paid by Prudential before it receives the notification.

If there is more than one **Beneficiary** but the **Beneficiary** record does not specify their shares, they will share equally. If a **Beneficiary** dies before you, that **Beneficiary's** interest will end. It will be shared equally by any remaining **Beneficiaries**, unless the **Beneficiary** record states otherwise.

ELIGIBLE CLASSES OF NEA MEMBERSHIP

All **Active** (including **Life Active**), **Staff**, and **Reserve** members who are **Actively Employed in the Field of Education** and are members in good standing with their **State Associations** are eligible for the **Program**. **Life Active** members must be **Actively Employed in the Field of Education** at the time of death to qualify for benefits under the **Program**. **Life Active** members will be deemed to have paid the same dues as **Active** members for determining their benefits under the **Program**. (See **Interruptions of NEA Membership** below.)

NEA Retired members, only while acting on **Association Business** in the capacity of an **Association Leader** (including **NEA Retired** activities), are eligible only for the $50,000 DUES-TAB Accidental Death Insurance Benefit or the $50,000 DUES-TAB Accidental Dismemberment Insurance Benefit.

INTERRUPTIONS OF NEA MEMBERSHIP

If an **Eligible Member** ceases **Continuous Membership** in the **NEA**, his or her insurance under the **Program** will terminate. If the member rejoins the **NEA** in a subsequent year and is eligible for the **Program**, the benefit under the **Program** will again accumulate starting as of the year he or she rejoins, and increases to the benefit limits described above.

Life Active members must maintain continuous employment in the field of education. If a **Life Active** member ceases to be employed in the field of education, his or her accumulated benefit under the **Program** will terminate. If the **Life Active** member returns to work in the field of education and is eligible for the **Program**, the benefit under the **Program** will again accumulate starting as of the year he or she returns to work in the field of education and increase to the benefit limits described above.

In the event an **Active** (including **Life Active**), **Reserve** or **Staff** member does not renew **NEA** membership or does not continue employment in the field of education in a succeeding membership year, his or her accumulated benefit will terminate as of September 1 of that succeeding membership year.

CLAIMS

You or your **Beneficiary** may file a claim for benefits under the **Program** by submitting a claim form to the NEA Insurance Operations Center. Claim forms are available from the NEA Insurance Operations Center and **NEA's MBC**.

Prior to paying claims, the NEA Insurance Operations Center will verify that the deceased was an **Eligible Member**. Records utilized to determine this information will include, but not necessarily be limited to, the **NEA MIT** database, **NEA** membership records, and state and local membership records. In the event of a dispute between any of the above records, the **NEA** membership record will be considered the **Foundation Record**.

The NEA Insurance Operations Center must be given written proof of death or accidental loss for which claim is made. Proof of death must be given to the NEA Insurance Operations Center within three years after death. Proof of accidental death or **Dismemberment** must cover the **Occurrence**, character and extent of loss. A claim for accidental death or **Dismemberment** insurance will not be considered valid unless such proof is furnished within 90 days after the date of the accidental loss or whenever reasonably possible.

Prudential, at its own expense, has the right to examine the person whose accidental loss is the basis of claim. Prudential may do this when and so often as is reasonable while the claim is pending.

No action at law or in equity shall be brought to recover on the Group Policy until 60 days after the written proof of an accidental loss is furnished. No such action shall be brought more than three years after the end of the time within which proof of such loss is required.

RIGHT OF APPEAL

If a claim for benefits is denied in whole or in part, you are entitled to have your claim initially reviewed by Prudential. You or your authorized representative should obtain from Prudential a written notice stating the specific reason(s) for the denial; a specific reference to the provisions in the Group Policy or the **Plan** upon which the denial of your claim is based; a description of any additional information or material necessary for you to perfect your claim, accompanied by an explanation of why such material or information is necessary; and an explanation of the claims review procedure under the **Plan**. You will then be entitled to a reconsideration of the denial of your claim in accordance with the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), as explained later in this document. Prudential, in its sole discretion, makes the final decision to approve or deny your claim.

If you have questions regarding the claims and appeal procedures outlined above, you may obtain answers from the NEA Insurance Operations Center at 1-800-523-5877 or **NEA's MBC** at 1-800-637-4636.

RIGHTS OF RETIRING MEMBERS

Except for **NEA Retired** members who are eligible for the $50,000 DUES-TAB **Association Business** Accidental Death Insurance Benefit and the $50,000 DUES-TAB **Association Business** Accidental Dismemberment Benefit, coverage under the **Program** will terminate when **Eligible Members** move out of a DUES-TAB-eligible membership class. Retiring **Eligible Members**, including **NEA Retired** members, will have the right to purchase group term life insurance through the **NEA MIT**. The term life insurance will be issued on a **Guaranteed-Issue** basis and will be equal to $1,000, the accumulated death benefit under the **Program**, rounded up to the next $1,000, provided the member meets all of the criteria described below:

- worked in a school-related job for at least 10 years;
- retired from a school-related job;
- maintains **NEA-Retired** membership; and
- notifies the **NEA MIT** of his or her retirement and expresses interest in purchasing his or her accrued death benefit by November 1 of the school year following retirement.

The rates charged for the purchased death benefit after retirement will be the rates currently in effect for the **NEA MIT's** Term Life Insurance Program, Schedule 10 of contract G20400.

CONVERSION PRIVILEGE FOR TERM LIFE INSURANCE

If you cease to be insured for the DUES-TAB Term Life Insurance under the Group Policy for one of the reasons stated below, you may convert all or part of your insurance under this coverage, which then ends, to a Prudential individual life insurance contract. Evidence of insurability is not required. You may convert all or part of your insurance to a Prudential individual life insurance contract for either of the following reasons:

1) Your membership in the classes eligible for DUES-TAB Term Life Insurance, other than **NEA Retired**, ends;

2) All term life insurance of the Group Policy for your class ends by amendment or otherwise. But, on the date that term life insurance for your class ends, you must have been insured for five years for DUES-TAB Term Life Insurance (or for DUES-TAB Term Life Insurance and any Prudential rider or group contract replaced by such insurance).

You must apply to Prudential for the individual contract and pay for the first premium within 31 days after you cease to be insured for DUES-TAB Term Life Insurance.

The individual contract must conform to the following:

The amount of the contract cannot be more than your DUES-TAB insurance benefit rounded up to the next $1,000 when your insurance ends. But, if it ends because all term life insurance of the Group Policy for your class ends, the total amount of individual insurance which you may get in place of your life insurance then ending under the Group Policy will not exceed the lesser of the following:

1) The total amount of your life insurance then ending under the Group Policy reduced by the amount of group life insurance from any carrier for which you are or become eligible within the next 31 days; or

2) $1,000.

The individual contract will be one that (1) Prudential usually issues at the age and amount applied for; and (2) conforms to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, having no distinction based on sex. This does not include term insurance or a contract with disability or supplementary benefits.

The premium will be based on Prudential's rate as it applies to the form and amount, and to your class of risk and age at the time.

If you die within 31 days after your Term Life insurance ends and while entitled to convert your insurance, the amount you could have converted will be paid as a claim. It is payable even if you did not apply for conversion.

AMENDMENT AND TERMINATION

Program

While the **NEA** expects to continue to provide this **Program** for **Eligible Members**, it reserves the right to amend, modify or terminate the **Program** at any time.

Plan and Trust

NEA may amend the **Plan** or **Trust** at any time in writing. The **Plan Administrator** must communicate any amendment to the **Plan** or **Trust** to all Participants and **Beneficiaries** then receiving benefits.

NEA also may terminate the **Plan** and **Trust** at any time. Termination of the **Plan** and **Trust**, however, may not deprive a Participant or **Beneficiary** of a right to receive benefits under the **Plan** which arose prior to the date of termination.

Upon termination of the **Trust**, the Trustees, with **NEA's** consent, may transfer the insurance policies and any surplus funds to any trust or trusts established for purposes substantially similar to those for which the **NEA MIT** was established.

The **Plan Administrator** must communicate termination of the **Plan** to all Participants, together with a summary describing the effect of the termination on the benefits provided to Participants under the **Plan**.

In addition, benefits provided to you under the **Plan** may be terminated on the first to occur of any of the following events:

The Group Policy or **Program** is discontinued for any reason.

You fail to satisfy the **Plan's** or **Program's** criteria for eligibility.

If you are a **Reserve** member and, at any time, 10 percent or more of all Participants fail to satisfy the **Plan's** employment requirement.

YOUR RIGHTS UNDER THE EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT INCOME SECURITY ACT

As a participant in the **Plan**, you are entitled to certain rights and protections under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 ("ERISA"). ERISA provides that all **Plan** Participants shall be entitled to:

Receive Information About Your Plan

You have the right to examine, without charge, at the offices of **NEA's Member Benefits Corporation**, 900 Clopper Road, Suite 300, Gaithersburg, MD 20878, and at other specified locations, such as worksites and union halls, all documents governing the **Plan**, including the insurance contracts (with riders and amendments) with the insurance carrier, the pertinent resolutions adopted by **NEA's** Board of Directors or Executive Committee for the administration of the **Plan**. You may also examine, without charge, copies of all documents pertaining to the **Plan** filed by the **NEA MIT** with the U.S. Department of Labor, including a copy of the latest annual report (Form 5500 series) which is available at the Public Disclosure Room of the Pension and Welfare Benefit Administration.

You have the right to obtain, upon written request to the **Plan Administrator** at the above address, copies of documents governing the operation of the **Plan**, including insurance contracts, and copies of the latest annual report (Form 5500 series) and updated summary plan description. The **Plan Administrator** may make a reasonable charge for the copies.

You are entitled to receive a summary financial report. The **Plan Administrator** is required by law to furnish each participant with a copy of this summary annual report. The **Plan Administrator** furnishes this report to you through publication in the *NEA Today*, *This Active Life*, and *Higher Education Advocate*. If you would like to receive a copy of the most recent summary annual report, please submit your written request to **NEA's MBC** at the above address.

Prudent Actions by Plan Fiduciaries

In addition to creating rights for you, ERISA imposes duties upon the people who are responsible for the operation of the employee benefit plan. The people who operate your Plan are called "fiduciaries." **NEA** and the trustees are fiduciaries. In addition, Prudential is the appropriate fiduciary for purposes of claim settlement and review of denied claims. The fiduciaries have a duty to operate the **Plan** prudently and in the interest of you and other **Plan** participants and **Beneficiaries**. No one, including your employer, your union, or any other person, may fire you or otherwise discriminate against you in any way to prevent you from obtaining the insurance benefits to which you are entitled under the **Plan** or from exercising your rights under ERISA.

Enforce Your Rights

If your claim for a benefit is denied or ignored, in whole or in part you are entitled to receive a written explanation from Prudential of the reason for the denial, to obtain copies of documents relating to the decision without charge, and to appeal any denial within certain time schedules.

Under ERISA, there are steps that you can take to enforce the above rights. For instance, if you request a copy of **Plan** documents or the latest annual report from the **Plan Administrator** and do not receive them within 30 days, you may file suit in a federal court. In such a case, the court may require the **Plan Administrator** to provide the materials and pay you up to $110 a day until you receive the materials, unless the materials were not sent because of reasons beyond the **Plan Administrator's** control. If you have a claim for benefits which is denied or ignored, in whole or in part, you may file suit in federal court. If it should happen that **Plan** fiduciaries misuse the **Plan's** money, or if you are discriminated against for asserting your rights, you may seek assistance from the U.S. Department of Labor, or you may file suit in a federal court. The court will decide who should pay court costs and legal fees. If you are successful, the court may order the person you have sued to pay these costs and fees. If you lose, the court may order you to pay these costs and fees, for example, if it finds your claim is frivolous.

Assistance with your Questions

If you have any questions about your **Plan**, you should contact **NEA's MBC**. If you have any questions about this statement or about your rights under ERISA, or if you need assistance in obtaining documents from the **Plan Administrator**, you should contact the nearest office of the Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, listed in your telephone directory or the Division of Technical Assistance and Inquiries, Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210. You may also obtain certain publications about your rights and responsibilities under ERISA by calling the publications hotline of the Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration.

NEA's MBC CAN BE REACHED BY CALLING TOLL FREE 1-800-637-4636.

DEFINITIONS

The terms defined below are used in the administration of the **Program**.

ACCIDENT is an unexpected occurrence that results in the death or bodily injury of an **Eligible Member** while covered under the **Program**. The DUES-TAB accidental death benefit does not provide benefits for suicide or attempt at suicide, intentionally self-inflicted injury, disease, infirmity, infection, medical or surgical treatment thereof.

ACTIVE is a class of membership within the **NEA** as defined under the **NEA** Bylaws in the current **NEA** Handbook.

ACTIVELY EMPLOYED IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION refers to members who are currently employed and paid by or employed and paid to work at an institution devoted primarily to public education for no less than one day per academic year.

ASSAULT is a violent physical attack.

ASSOCIATION BUSINESS is participation in or travel to and from meetings or other activities at the specific direction of a **Local** or **State Association**, or the **NEA**.

ASSOCIATION LEADER is an **NEA** member who is serving in an official capacity for a **Local** or **State Association** or the **NEA**, as defined by the applicable affiliate's constitution and bylaws (in the case of a **Local** or **State Association Leader;** or as defined by **NEA's** Constitution and Bylaws (in the case of an **NEA** leader).

This class of individuals can include – but is not necessarily limited to elected officers, executive committee members, members of boards of directors, members of duly constituted standing and special committees, Association or building representatives, and other deemed by the **Plan Administrator** to be officially designated to act on behalf of a **Local** or **State Association** or the **NEA**.

BENEFICIARY is a person or persons identified by the **Eligible Member** to receive the death benefit in the event of the **Eligible Member's** death. In the event a **Beneficiary** has not been designated, the death benefit will be payable in the order of priority described in the **Beneficiaries** section.

CONTINUOUS MEMBERSHIP is membership in the **NEA** which is maintained without interruption.

DISMEMBERMENT is the loss of sight (defined as total and irrevocable loss of sight of either eye) and/or the loss of a hand or foot (defined as severance at or above the wrist or ankle).

ELIGIBLE MEMBER is an **NEA** member in one of the eligible classes (as described in the section entitled "Eligible Classes of NEA Membership") who is entitled to participate in the **Program**.

ELIGIBLE MEMBER'S OCCUPATION is the job description of the **Eligible Member** as defined by his or her employment contract, collective bargaining agreement, or other government document which describes the duties and responsibilities of the **Eligible Member**.

FOUNDATION RECORD is the **NEA** membership record as maintained by NEA Membership Records.

GUARANTEED-ISSUE means the guaranteed issuance of life insurance coverage to the qualifying retired member, regardless of the retired member's health.

HOMICIDE is the intentional and unlawful killing of one human being by another.

LIFE ACTIVE is a class of membership within **NEA** as defined in the current Bylaws by which has not been offered since 1973 when the **Life Active** membership category was terminated prospectively.

LOCAL ASSOCIATION is a duly constituted affiliate of a **State Association**.

MAXIMUM BENEFIT is the upper limit of benefits payable under the provisions of the **Program**.

NEA is the National Education Association of the United States.

NEA DUES is the portion of dues paid by **NEA** members that goes to **NEA**, as established annually by the **NEA**. **Life Active** members will be deemed to have paid the same dues as **Active** members.

NEA DUES TAB PROGRAM is the group term life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance program provided by the **NEA MIT** to **Eligible Members** of the **NEA** as set forth in this **Program Document**.

NEA MEMBERS INSURANCE TRUST (NEA MIT) is a 501(c)(9) trust created by the **NEA** in 1977 to provide life, accident, Medicare supplement, and other insurance benefits to specified **NEA** members.

NEA RETIRED is a special category of membership consisting solely of the retired members of the **NEA**. Pre-retired members can join **NEA Retired** as pre-subscribers.

NEA'S MEMBER BENEFITS CORPORATION (NEA MBC) is NEA's wholly owned subsidiary designated by **NEA** to provide certain administrative functions for the **NEA MIT**.

OCCURRENCE is an incident resulting in either a single or multiple loss.

PLAN is the Plan created in conjunction with the **NEA MIT**.

PLAN ADMINISTRATOR is the **NEA**. The **NEA**, however, may delegate specific administrative functions to **NEA's MBC** and to Seabury & Smith, the **Program's** administrator of the NEA Insurance Operations Center.

RESERVE is a class of membership within the **NEA** as defined under **NEA** Bylaws in the current **NEA** Handbook.

SEABURY & SMITH is the **Program** administrator designated by **NEA**.

STAFF is a class of membership within the **NEA** as defined under **NEA** Bylaws in the current NEA Handbook.

STATE ASSOCIATION is a duly constituted state affiliate of NEA.

TRUST is the **NEA Members Insurance Trust**.

ESP of the Year

Helping Kids Build Their Own Success

Alejandro Lugo spoke no English when he met **Irma Valdespino** in New Mexico back in the mid-1970s. He was an 11-year-old son of Mexican migrant workers who spent the first part of each school year in New Mexico, and the other part in Arizona. He's now a professor of anthropology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

"This," says Lugo, referring to his doctorate from Stanford, his master's from the University of Wisconsin, and his professorship, "never would have happened without Mrs. Valdespino. I wouldn't have survived middle school. She was non-threatening and charming and committed to her students. But the most important thing was she believed in me. She believed I could do the work."

Valdespino has influenced many lives during her 26 years working for Las Cruces schools. This spring, NEA recognized her work on behalf of students when she received the organization's Educational Support Professional of the Year Award.

Valdespino says she was "thrilled and humbled" to be recognized with this award. "I had no idea I'd receive it. There were other people in contention, and to be selected by the NEA is an incredible experience," says Valdespino, who's currently an educational assistant with bilingual programs at Mayfield High School.

Many of Mayfield's students come from Mexico. Valdespino believes it's important for society in general to respect their heritage and for these children to develop pride in their culture.

Accomplishing the latter isn't always easy, given the difficulties many students in Las Cruces— and elsewhere—face. It can be a struggle to become proficient in English, while maintaining proficiency in their first language.

Many kids face huge additional challenges coming from single parent families, trying to find their particular place in school and the whole society, while maintaining their own cultural identity.

Valdespino believes, "Bilingual children must overcome so much, but they are survivors. They're resilient."

"I love working with children. They're part of my life," Valdespino adds. "I myself was a bilingual student. These kids are special. I can identify with them." ✔

Photos by Fernando Garcia

Kidney Donation Saves a Life

Sometimes life's best lessons are learned outside class. East Hartford, Connecticut, teacher **David Bocchichio's** selfless act of donating a kidney to the mother of three of his former students was a powerful lesson for his students. Best of all, the mother, Evelyn Arroyo, gained a new lease on life.

Bocchichio, a health and physical education teacher and member of the East Hartford Education Association, volunteered his kidney after he learned that none of Arroyo's relatives was a donor match and her prospects for survival without the transplant were considered grim.

The operation was unusual because most donors are either relatives or people who have died in accidents. Since he is a nonrelative, Bocchichio is considered a Good Samaritan donor.

"It's a heroic thing," surgeon Matthew Brown told the *Hartford Courant* following the operation. "It's an incredibly charitable thing to do."

Bocchichio and Arroyo gained national attention when they appeared on the *Oprah Winfrey* and *Today* shows. Connecticut Governor John Rowland praised Bocchichio's kidney donation, saying it shows that "teachers are mentors, role models, and positive influences in the lives of our children. They remind the rest of us of the goodness of mankind."

While Bocchichio finds this description flattering, he remains modest about the attention he has received. He says he doesn't consider himself a heroic figure, adding that he was unafraid of the six-hour surgery and was ready to make the donation.

"This was something I wanted to do and it was well within my capacity to do," he says. "A lot of people are concerned about the pain during the surgery. I wasn't. I'm young, strong, and in good physical condition. In fact, this was my third surgery in the past year and a half."

During his recovery, Bocchichio received "a ton of support," from his teaching colleagues. "They were thrilled. They gave me 100 percent support, before and after surgery. They made sure I've been comfortable, and they often visited or talked with me to make sure I wasn't pushing myself too hard."

Bocchichio believes character education is a big part of his curriculum and says his operation fits in well with what he tries to teach his students about "helping people and being kind and generous." ✔

Mike Lydick

Preserving the Trails

Larry Smith hasn't exactly struck gold in Jacksonville, Oregon. But he's hit upon an idea that's reviving what had been a dying gold mine town.

Smith, an NEA Retired member, is a founding member of the Jacksonville Woodlands Association, which since 1989 has purchased and preserved trails surrounding Jacksonville.

This small town, center of what used to be a bustling gold mining trade, was one of the first National Historic Landmark Cities. The mines were abandoned 70 years ago, and like many mining towns, Jacksonville went belly up.

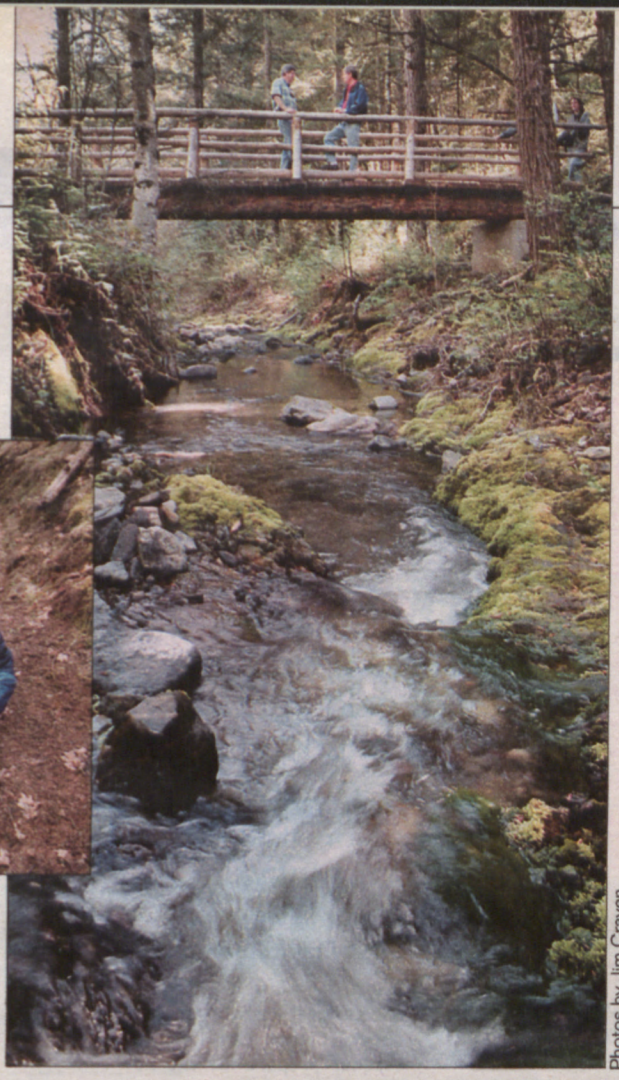
But now, "tourism keeps the town alive," Smith says. The woodland trails "help the town capitalize on what locals call the 'linger longer effect.' You can see the historic part of town in three hours. But we have 17 restaurants here, which isn't bad for a small town, and other businesses." All benefit from the foot traffic that the Jacksonville trails attract.

Smith credits much of the success of the trails, and the adjoining town, to his students.

A 22-acre patch of trees started it all back in the 1980s. Smith and a student, Brian Mulhollen, were walking past an old mine. "Brian's the kind of kid who's constantly coming up with ideas of how to do things," Smith says. "Walking by the mine, I said, 'There's an old mine.' And he says, 'How do we get it?'"

Smith says he was stumped but lamely suggested he go down and talk to the city manager. The 11-year-old Brian did just that. When the purchase came up for discussion at the city council meeting, Brian raised the entire purchase amount of $1,000 right there at the meeting.

Other students soon got involved. The association started looking for other parcels of land, and now it has 19 pieces of property totaling 300 acres, seven miles of trails, and a couple old gold mines, all worth about $10 million. ✔



Photos by Jim Craven

Still Teaching After All These (50) Years

Matt Sumner

Dorothy Grace Boyajian teaches a combined class of 31 fourth and fifth graders in California. Not remarkable, until you learn she's 70 years old and has taught for 50 years. "The years have gone by so fast and wonderfully. It's been super," says the veteran who has no immediate plans to retire.

Boyajian describes herself as an American of Armenian descent. She's proud of her mother who spoke seven languages, including Greek, Russian, French, and Armenian. "She was ahead of her time, a major inspiration to me, and she always valued education," Boyajian says.

Now, many years after her mother landed at Ellis Island from Armenia in 1920, Boyajian has completed 35 years at Sunnybrae School and a total of 50 years in San Mateo, 20 miles from San Francisco. She doesn't drive a car, instead riding to school with friends or finding other means.

How's she kept it up? "I love children," she says. "I love what I do each year. Each group is a new inspiration. Each child is unique in personality and way of learning."

Her best advice to new teachers? "Make sure you love kids, and that you want to do everything possible to help them learn. Find something good in every child, even the naughtiest ones. They come with their minds open, but they need to be active learners and everyone can improve. I always tell them: Good, better, best. Never let it rest."

And what does this thoroughly modern 50-year classroom veteran say about all this testing that's going on? "It's important to test, she says, "but testing's not the ultimate answer. Some kids don't take tests well."

Boyajian has no idea how many students she's taught. But one of them found her recently. "I was in the car with a friend and a policeman stopped us. He came over to the car and said, 'I'm Brian Anderson, and you're the best teacher I ever had.'" ✔

Dan Cepeda

Dream House = Dream Lesson

Anna Denardi teaches both Spanish and math to middle school children in Guernsey, Wyoming. She enjoys both, but one advantage of her Spanish classes is that all the students are there by choice.

With math, she finds, some students come to class hating the subject.

One of her main goals has been to convince students that math is for real, not just a set of teacher-made hurdles created to trip them up.

So she developed a set of lesson plans in which her students designed and decorated their dream houses on a budget of $100,000.

"One thing they found out is that $100,000 is not a lot of money for a house," she says.

Denardi won a 1999 Presidential Award in Math and Science Teaching.

The idea for the home-design project came to her when she and her husband were planning a house for themselves, and she realized that she was using all sorts of middle school math—percentages, ratios, areas, estimation, and more.

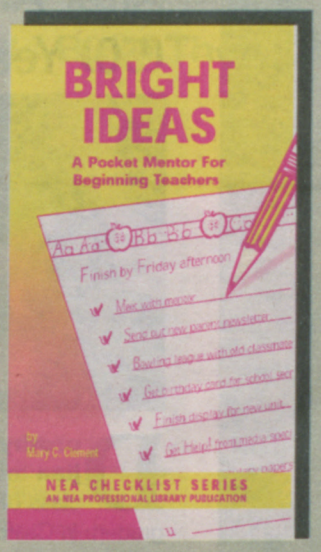
Her virtual home-design lessons have hooked many students who started out thinking they couldn't do math and didn't want to. "If this is math, I can put up with this," she recalls one formerly phobic student saying.

Students started asking her for more instruction to help them with the project. "They'd say, 'We're confused. Lecture for a while,'" Denardi recalls. "Sometime they even said, 'We need homework tonight.'"

Denardi gives away her dream house lesson plans. The whole set takes a year to complete.

For more: Contact Denardi at adenardi@hotmail.com. ✔

Back-to-School Gift Pack


BRIGHT IDEAS
A Pocket Mentor For Beginning Teachers
Finish by Friday afternoon
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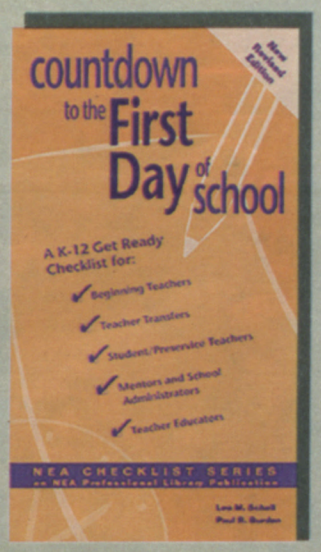
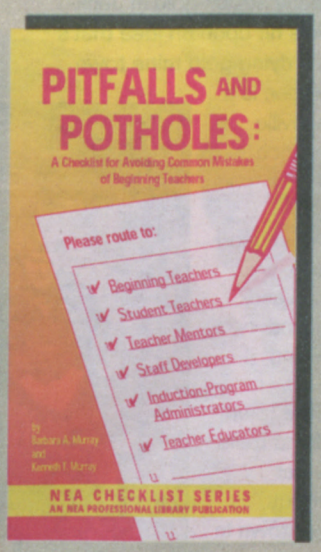
Tips and techniques to help you prepare, personally and professionally, for your first teaching job.
56 pp. Item #2153-3-00-D



Countdown to the First Day of School

A comprehensive get-ready checklist that can help any teacher prepare for the new school year.
72 pp. Item 2162-2-00-D



Pitfalls and Potholes
A Checklist for Avoiding Common Mistakes of Beginning Teachers

A guide to avoiding the most common mistakes new teachers say they wish they'd been warned about in college.
56 pp. Item #2151-7-00-D

This fall, don't just welcome your new colleagues. Give them a head start on success!

An $18.85 value for just $11.00!

All that head start takes is the NEA Professional Library *Back-to-School Gift Pack*, a set of three handy guides that can help all newcomers to your schools' faculty — beginning, transfer and student teachers — make a smooth transition and succeed with students.

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Now, for a limited time only, you can get the *Back-to-School Gift Pack* at a special NEA member price. You can get this three-pack for just $11! That's more than 40% off the regular list price.

Additional titles in the Checklist series are available at the regular NEA member price:
NEW! *Let's Team Up: A Checklist for Paraeducators, Teachers and Principals* (Item #2163-0-00-D); *The Discipline Checklist: Advice from 60 Successful Elementary Teachers* (Item #2152-5-00-D); *The Best of Works4Me: Winning Tips from Classroom Teachers* (Item #2161-4-00-D); *Moving to the Block: Getting Ready to Teach in Extended Periods of Learning Time* (Item #2159-2-00-D); *The School Change Checklist: A Basic Guide* (Item C2155-X-00-D).

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Is This the Right Time To Invest?

Q: My neighbor says that autumn is a good time to get started in the market. He always seems to make money. Is he right about this?

A: He's half right. Autumn is as good a time as any. But it's no more special than winter or spring. I've heard the studies that say stocks do well from November through April. But take a look at what happened last year. Stocks began to sink in the fall and kept falling right through April.

I'd love to see your neighbor's portfolio. Only then would we know how much money he really makes. He sounds to me like one of those investors who is always trying to make sense of the market, to make it fit into some kind of pattern. The truth is that no one knows when the market will take off or when it will sink. Those who look for patterns usually end up trading too much and getting lower returns.

One of the hardest things for investors to learn is that stocks provide a higher return because the risk is higher than buying, for example, bank certificates of deposit. You can't control the risk. You're either willing to take it or you're not. For most people, it's better just to get in there. Ignore the short-term gyrations of the market. Ignore the predictions on the nightly news. Ignore your neighbor.

But don't ignore the emotional cost of investing. It can be hard on your nerves if you're not prepared for it. This is what trips people up every time. Most people hate to lose money. Intellectually, they can entertain the idea of watching the market go down with the smug knowledge that it will head back up. But when it actually happens, they say: "Yikes! That is my hard-earned money. And it is going up in flames. I must put a stop to this." Everything that Mom and Dad and Grandma ever taught them comes into play. They don't want to be fickle or foolish or wasteful. They don't want to gamble their money away. So when the market sinks, they bail out.

That's what happened to so many new investors in my online newsgroup last spring. They watched the market tumble down and down and down. And then they sold. At the bottom. They just couldn't take it anymore. Here is what one investor wrote: "I thought I would hold forever. If my funds had continued to grow, I probably would have."

I don't believe we can make sense of the market in the short term. I think you just have to get in there—but only after you've thought through, really thought through, what you will do when the market goes down. The stock market rewards those who have patience, who hang in for the long term.

Q: Whenever I read a story about how to get started as an investor, the example is somebody who makes $50,000 a year. I don't make half that. Should I bother investing?

A: Yes, of course. The key to financial success isn't the amount of money you make. It's discipline. Financial planners tell me that it is the clients who make the most money who waste the most.

You should do just two things. First pay off your credit card debt- That gives you a guaranteed return that equals whatever interest rate the debt carries. So if you owe $500 on a credit card with an 18 percent interest rate and you pay it off, you've earned 18 percent on that money.

Second, set up a savings discipline. Make a game of it. Arrange to have a certain amount taken out of every paycheck and deposited in the credit union at work.

Start small and then see how far you can stretch it. When you've accumulated a bit, set up the same kind of monthly plan to invest in a conservative balanced fund, one that invests in both the stock and bond markets. You can do that for as little as $25 a month.

That is the best way to get started no matter how much money you make.

Q: My husband and I are expecting our first child. I want to start a college savings plan, but my husband refuses. He paid for college himself and says he wants to teach our child the same important lesson.

A: One of the interesting things about having kids is that it challenges your most cherished beliefs. Like your husband, I paid for college myself and I felt the same way. Now I have kids, 15 and 11, and I see how hard they work at school and sports and part-time jobs.

I see, too, that the world is much more complex. Kids have to demonstrate knowledge and expertise in computers, and they must show leadership skills and have hobbies, community service, and summer internships to put on their résumés.

I want to help my kids with college. And I'll bet your husband will too. I wouldn't push him now, though. Give him a little time. ✔

Mary Rowland is an author and contributor to several financial planning magazines. You can e-mail your personal finance question to her at MoneyQuestions@neamb.com.

Thrifty Educator

This month's money-saving tip comes from Edward Chappie, a fourth grade teacher from Johnstown, Pennsylvania.

"I ask my fourth graders to bring in books that they've already read. Then we set up displays for those who brought books to sell. Booksellers also get a chance to circulate and buy books from others. Since there are at least five book exchange days in a school year, the students get to resell many of the used books that they bought. I've found that it's good to set a price limit on what a used book may sell for. Thirty minutes is plenty of time for a book exchange period. Parents are especially happy that their children are getting to read many books at little or no cost."

Got an idea?

If you have a suggestion for how your colleagues can save money at school, send it along to neatoday@nea.org.

Surveys of NEA members over the past year rate NEA Member Benefits Member Service Center representatives 99% for courteous and knowledgeable service.

Heads Up from NEA Member Benefits

The Difference is Service—This operating objective is what distinguishes NEA Member Benefits as a premier provider of insurance, financial, and investment products to NEA members.

For more than 40 years, NEA Member Benefits has been serving teachers and education support professionals by educating them on financial and retirement planning issues and offering financial products that are custom-designed for their needs.

NEA Member Benefits' operations and programs (27 products in all) are totally self-supporting—*no member dues are ever used to develop or promote our programs.* Behind the scenes, NEA Member Benefits is working to enhance existing products and bring worthwhile new programs to the NEA membership.

Our research and risk management departments assist our product teams to evaluate potential new products and product features. Member opinion plays a significant role in determining which products we choose to sponsor!

Trained representatives of our Member Service Center are available six days a week to answer questions. Our quality assurance department continuously reviews all aspects of NEA Member Benefits' operations and makes recommendations for quality improvements.

The NEA Member Benefits Web Site (www.neamb.com) is an excellent resource for up-to-date information on NEA Member Benefits' programs.

Don't delay in finding out how NEA Member Benefits can serve you—call the Member Service Center toll free at 800/637-4636, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (or Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.) ET.

An RA for the Record Books

The 2001 NEA Representative Assembly

Deep into the night, delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly in Los Angeles debated the issues.

Delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly worked deep into the night to complete business on the final day of the Association's 80th Representative Assembly, held July 4–7 in Los Angeles.

From school safety and low-performing schools to charter schools and high-stakes testing, more than 9,000 delegates took responsibility for ensuring all students receive a quality education in America's public schools, consistent with the RA theme of "Making Every Public School Great"

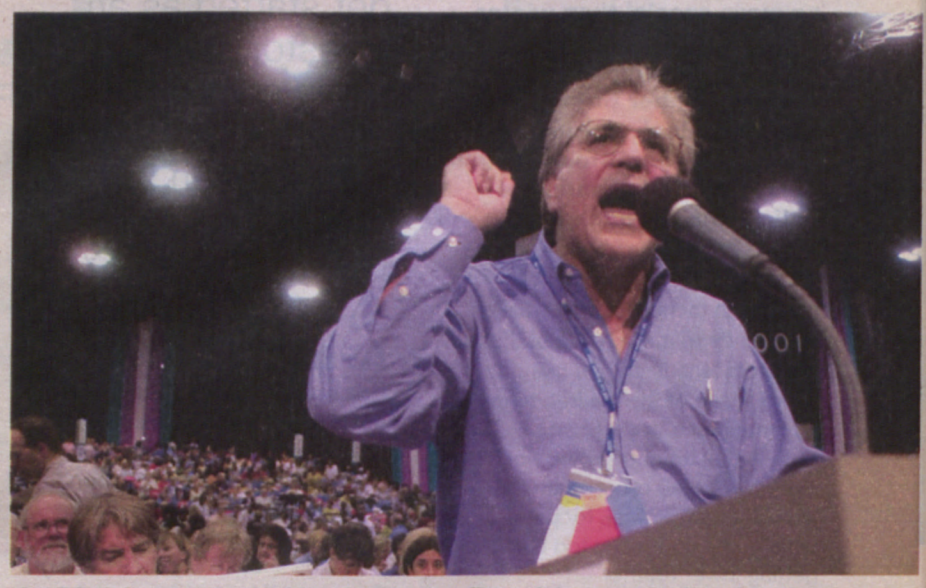
In his keynote address, NEA President Bob Chase challenged delegates to help students and schools of greatest need: "It is not a question of whether we can lift up low-performing schools, but whether we have the will to do so." Taking the first step, Chase said he would visit low-performing schools across the country during his final year in office. "In every city and town that I visit during my last year as NEA president, I will make it my business to visit those schools that are not showcases," Chase said. "Not to shine a spotlight of shame on these schools, but to offer a small beacon of light."

On the policy front, delegates adopted new charter school guidelines to be used by educators, policymakers and parents in evaluating state charter school laws. The policy, drafted by a special committee made up of NEA officials, educators, and charter school experts, provides principles for ensuring that taxpayer-funded charter schools are held to the same instructional standards as other mainstream public schools.

In addition, NEA delegates approved a historic partnership agreement with the American Federation of Teachers that provides a framework for regular and focused cooperation between the two unions.

At the classroom level, delegates expressed concern about the harmful effects of high-stakes tests that are imposed on students without giving them the extra support required to achieve at higher levels. With overwhelming support, delegates directed NEA to support legislation giving parents the ability to let their children opt out of high-stakes tests.

Further, delegates embraced several new resolutions addressing teacher quality through compensation innovations. They overwhelmingly approved a resolution that endorses additional compensation to retain experienced educators in the classroom, and approved criteria for additional compensation to education employees beyond the traditional single-salary schedule.



An RA delegate speaks his mind during floor debate at the Los Angeles Convention Center.

In his first RA address as NEA executive director, John Wilson urged delegates to "wear the union label proudly" and propose solutions that improve education employees' professional standing. "That's why NEA's initiative to make low-performing schools a top priority for our nation is so important," he said.

In a commitment to create harassment-free and discrimination-free learning environments, NEA delegates also called for the establishment of a task force to look at issues relating to policies on sexual orientation in a thorough and meaningful way. The task force will make its recommendations in February 2002.

Additionally, NEA delegates brought focus to school safety in a presentation titled "The Strongest Links," which featured individuals taking action to create safer schools and communities.

Providing quality teaching and learning opportunities for all students filled discussions and debates.

National Teacher of the Year Michele Forman, a Vermont world history teacher, challenged delegates to speak out against emergency licenses, waivers, and other practices that lower teaching standards. "Every child deserves a fully certified, licensed teacher. No child's education should be in the hands of someone ill-equipped to meet that child's needs," she urged.

Education Support Professional of the Year Irma Valdespino urged delegates to respect the language and culture of bilingual students and fully recognize their talents and strengths.

In other action, delegates elected new leaders to the NEA Executive Committee: Michael Marks, a high school dramatic arts and debate teacher from Hattiesburg, Mississippi; Rebecca "Becky" Pringle, a physical science teacher from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; and Mike Billirakis, a high school social studies teacher from Mogadore (Portage County), Ohio.

Bob Riha, Jr.

Before the RA began, NEA Retired and Student members combined forces to clean up the buildings and grounds of Jordan High School in south Los Angeles.

You can find complete coverage of this year's NEA Representative Assembly—including the full text of all adopted new business and major convention addresses—on the Web at www.nea.org/ra.

Photos by Matt Ferguson

Through four days of debate, RA delegates acted on many issues, from charter schools to school safety, student testing to teacher quality.

Where We Stand

Each year, the NEA members elected as delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly adopt Resolutions that spell out exactly where our Association stands on the many different issues that impact education and educators.

The complete text of this year's Resolutions appears on the Web at www.nea.org/resolutions. On this Web site, you can search by keywords to easily find the specific Resolutions on the topics that most interest you. If you don't have Web access and would like a printed copy of the Resolutions, please mail your request to *NEA Today*.

The Resolutions are organized around 10 basic goals set out in the Preamble to the NEA Constitution. The index below lists these 10 goal categories and the titles of the Resolutions in each category — and indicates all the Resolutions that have been either added or revised since last year.

Beginning below and continuing on the next two pages of this special *NEA Today* Resolutions section, you'll find the major new added or revised Resolutions highlighted.

List of Resolutions

A. Serve As The National Voice For Education

A-4. Parental Involvement

The National Education Association believes that a community engaged in the life of its public schools is paramount to the future of public education. The Association also believes that a partnership must be formed among parents/guardians, schools, the Association, and the community to address the mutual interests of the entire community.

The Association further believes that parents/guardians who are active participants in the education of their children increase the likelihood of the achievement of educational excellence. Parents/guardians, teachers, other education employees, school board members, and the community must set high expectations for student behavior and academic success and provide the encouragement and support for each student to achieve his or her full potential.

The Association believes that innovative programs should be developed and resources committed to promote and increase family and community involvement in public schools and to promote and increase the involvement of education employees in the community. The Association encourages its affiliates to work collaboratively with the community in establishing such programs and finding the resources necessary to make the programs successful.

The Association also believes that parents/guardians should be encouraged to visit their children's schools and communicate with their children's teachers and other education employees with whom the children have daily contact. The Association further believes that parents/guardians, students, community members, teachers, other education employees, and school board members should promote the successes of the collaboration between the school and the community. (2001)

A-13. School Accountability and Improvement

The National Education Association supports effective and fair school accountability systems. The Association believes that these systems must promote high levels of student achievement and ensure that the best teaching practices are supported and utilized. The Association also believes that the focus of the accountability system must be on the school, not on individual stakeholders, as the unit for evaluation and improvement of student learning. Development and implementation of the accountability system must ensure that the stakeholders at the school, district, state, and national levels share the responsibility for establishing clear goals, adopting high standards for student achievement, and providing adequate and equitable funding and support systems.

The Association further believes that a school accountability system must—

a. Promote educational excellence

b. Ensure the alignment of standards, assessments, and curricula

c. Balance its focus on school context, process, and student performance

d. Set high standards for student learning, levels of support by each stakeholder, and clearly defined goals for the school as a unit

e. Provide for the development and implementation of a valid methodology for use as an assessment tool to determine the required funding necessary to enable all students to achieve educational excellence

f. Provide professional development for all education employees prior to implementation of the system

g. Use multiple assessment tools and sources of data that are valid and reliable

h. Include necessary accommodations and modifications to maximize the success of all students

i. Include measures to improve school accountability

j. Identify how the school as a unit achieves its goals

k. Identify the quality, quantity, and impact of support provided by each stakeholder

l. Identify and address the internal and external factors that impact student learning and achievement

m. Provide for the timely dissemination of assessment results to all stakeholders

n. Be applied in a fair and equitable manner

o. Include periodic evaluation and modification of the system

p. Provide for the development of a school improvement plan.

The Association also believes that the school improvement process must, as a minimum—

a. Involve all school staff as active partners in the development of the plan

b. Provide the additional funding, resources, and assistance necessary to accomplish the plan

c. Identify the responsibilities of each stakeholder—students, education employees, parents/guardians, community members, government, policymakers, social agencies, and taxpayers—in the implementation of the plan

d. Provide time for planning, implementation, and reassessment

e. Be consistent with education employees' rights and responsibilities as set forth in laws, contracts, policies, and/or local agreement processes. (1971, 2001)

A-14. Financial Support of Public Education

The National Education Association believes that every state should ensure its students a quality education by providing the funding needed to enable all students to achieve educational excellence. Such an education requires adequate and equitable funding from public tax sources for schools to obtain the resources (e.g., personnel, programs, materials, buildings, and technology) to meet the needs of all students. The Association also believes that—

a. An increasing portion of public funds should be for direct instruction of students

b. The amount of aid must be generally predictable for long-range planning and specifically predictable for year-to-year planning

c. Present programs of specific aid must be expanded and improved by consolidation and simplification of administration

d. Tax revision favorable to public education should be encouraged and continually reviewed at every governmental level

e. Local governing boards must be fiscally independent, and restrictive limits must not be imposed on their budgets or long-term borrowing

f. The state and local share of finance must be derived from a tax system that is balanced and complementary in nature, includes all broad-based taxes, reduces the excessive reliance on property taxes, and protects subsistence income

g. Provisions must be made for research, development, implementation, continuation, and improvement in education practices. Funding must be included for resources such as personnel, time for staff planning, training and professional development, facilities, equipment, and materials

h. State and federal mandates affecting public education programs must be accompanied by adequate and equitable funding

i. School trust lands must be administered with the generation of funds for public education as a primary goal and in a manner that ensures the sustainable use of those lands by current and future generations. State school trust funds should be fairly compensated by the federal government for school trust lands included in national parks, monuments, or wilderness areas

j. Efforts should be made at the state and federal levels to ensure stable, adequate, and equitable funding of public schools historically receiving revenues derived from state and federal lands and natural resources. These efforts should include, but not be limited to, ensuring the sustainable use of these public lands and resources by current and future generations

k. Additional funding must be provided to cover the cost of achieving the goals of raising student performance, implementing new programs, and raising standards of student learning

l. Funding should be greater for students facing social, economic, and/or education challenges

m. Funds must be provided for programs to alleviate race, gender, and sexual orientation discrimination and to eliminate portrayal of race, gender, and sexual orientation stereotypes in the public schools

n. Public funds must not be expended for any materials used to promote race, gender, or sexual orientation stereotypes and/or biases

o. Public funds must not be expended in institutions where either specific programs or the institution has been found guilty of discrimination

p. Categorical funding must be assured in areas such as special education, bilingual/English as a second language, class size reduction, and the economically/educationally disadvantaged

q. Any institution, agency, or individual receiving financial aid from federal, state, or local governments must adhere to all applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations.

The Association opposes providing any public revenues to sectarian pre-K through 12 schools. The Association also opposes providing such revenues to nonsectarian pre-K through 12 private schools or to nonpublic school students in pre-K through 12 education, unless such revenues are used for educational services that are not available in public schools to which students have reasonable access. (1997, 2001)

A-29. Improving and Maintaining Educational Facilities

The National Education Association believes that many educational facilities are in a state of decay, neglect, and/or deterioration. The Association supports funding to modernize, expand, replace, and/or maintain these facilities in order to provide a safe and effective teaching and learning environment for students and education employees.

The Association also believes that the community, parents/guardians, students, and education employees must be effectively involved in the development of plans to modernize, expand, and/or replace facilities.

The Association further believes that preventive maintenance in all facilities is equally important in achieving this goal. (1969, 2001)

A-31. Federally or State-Mandated Choice/Parental Option Plans

The National Education Association believes that federally or state-mandated parental option or choice plans compromise free, equitable, universal, and quality public education for every student. Therefore, the Association opposes such federally or state-mandated choice or parental option plans.

The Association also believes that local districts, in partnership with state and federal governments, must provide a quality education for every student by securing sufficient funding to maintain and to enhance excellence in each local public school district.

The Association continues to support alternative programs for specific purposes in the public schools. (1989, 2001)

A-36. U.S. Federal Schools

The National Education Association believes that all federal schools, except those under the control of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, should come under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Education.

The Association also believes that all dependents of U.S. government employees overseas and in Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (DDESS) should be afforded the opportunity to attend such schools and is unalterably opposed to any attempt by Congress to privatize any of these federal schools. (1980, 2001)

B. Advance The Cause Of Education For All Individuals

B-1. Early Childhood Education

The National Education Association supports early childhood education programs in the public schools for children from birth through age eight. The Association also supports a high-quality program of transition from home and/or preschool to the public kindergarten or first grade. This transition should include communication and cooperation among parents/guardians, the preschool staff, and the public school staff. The Association believes that such programs should be held in facilities that are appropriate to the developmental needs of these children. The Association also believes that early childhood education programs should include a full continuum of services for parents/guardians and children, including child-care, child development, developmentally appropriate and diversity-based curricula, special education, and appropriate bias-free screening devices. Early childhood education programs also must be sensitive to and meet the physical, social, mental, and emotional health and nutritional needs of children.

The Association further believes that early childhood education programs should maintain small group size with appropriate staff/child ratios for each age level. These programs must be staffed by the appropriate ratio of teachers, administrators, and support staff who are prepared in early childhood education and child development. When two half-day sessions are taught by one teacher, the total class load for both sessions should not exceed the number of students in a first-grade class. Males should be encouraged and recruited to enter and be actively involved in early childhood education. Preparation programs for staff should lead to credentials consistent with the educational standards in each state.

The Association believes that full-day, every-day kindergarten programs should be fully funded by the state.

The Association recognizes the importance of parental involvement in a child's development. The Association further supports the provision of training programs that prepare parents/guardians to take an active role in the child's education. These programs should provide an awareness of the expectations that will be placed on the child as well as familiarization with new policies and procedures that the child will experience in the new environment.

The Association also believes that federal legislation should be enacted to assist in organizing the implementation of fully funded early childhood education programs offered through the public schools. These programs must be available to all children on an equal basis and should include mandatory kindergarten with compulsory attendance.

The Association supports regulations requiring children starting kindergarten to have reached age five at the beginning of a kindergarten program.

The Association advocates the establishment of fully funded early childhood special education programs. These programs and necessary services should be readily accessible for children with disabilities and staffed by certified/licensed teachers, qualified support staff, and therapists. (1975, 2001)

B-7. Diversity

The National Education Association believes that a diverse society enriches all individuals. Similarities and differences among races, ethnicity, color, national origin, language, geographic location, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, size, occupation, and marital, parental, or economic status form the fabric of a society.

The Association also believes that education should foster the values of appreciation and acceptance of the various qualities that pertain to people as individuals and as members of diverse populations.

The Association further believes in the importance of observances, programs, and curricula that accurately portray and recognize the roles, contributions, cultures, and history of these diverse groups and individuals.

The Association encourages affiliates and members to become part of programs and observances that may include cultural and heritage celebrations and/or history months. (1995, 2001)

B-9. Racism, Sexism, and Sexual Orientation Discrimination

The National Education Association believes in the equality of all individuals. Discrimination and stereotyping based on such factors as race, gender, immigration status, disability, ethnicity, occupation, and sexual orientation must be eliminated.

The Association also believes that plans, activities, and programs for education employees, students, parents/guardians, and the community should be developed to identify and eliminate discrimination and stereotyping in all educational settings. Such plans, activities, and programs must—

a. Increase respect, understanding, acceptance, and sensitivity toward individuals and groups in a diverse society composed of such groups as American Indians/Alaska Natives, Asians and Pacific Islanders, Blacks, Hispanics, women, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgendered people, and people with disabilities

b. Eliminate discrimination and stereotyping in curricula, textbooks, resource and instructional materials, activities, etc.

c. Foster the dissemination and use of nondiscriminatory and nonstereotypical language, resources, practices, and activities

d. Eliminate institutional discrimination

e. Integrate an accurate portrayal of the roles and contributions of all groups throughout history across curricula, particularly groups who have been underrepresented historically

f. Identify how prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination have limited the roles and contributions of individuals and groups, and how these limitations have challenged and continue to challenge our society

g. Eliminate subtle practices that favor the education of one student over another on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation

h. Encourage all members of the educational community to examine assumptions and prejudices, including, but not limited to, racism, sexism, and homophobia, that might limit the opportunities and growth of students and education employees

i. Offer positive and diverse role models in our society, including the recruitment, hiring, and promotion of diverse education employees in our public schools

j. Coordinate with organizations and concerned agencies that promote the contributions, heritage, culture, history, and special health and care needs of diverse population groups

k. Promote a safe and inclusive environment for all.

The Association encourages its affiliates to develop and implement training programs on these matters. (1996, 2001)

B-12. Asian and Pacific Islander Education

The National Education Association recognizes that the complex and diverse needs of Asian and Pacific Islander children require the direct involvement of Asian and Pacific Islander educators, parents/guardians, and community leaders in the development of programs that preserve the rich heritage of their cultures.

The Association believes in efforts that provide for the—

a. Preservice and continuing education of teachers

b. Development of curriculum and instructional materials and programs, including English proficiency programs that are designed to meet the language needs of Asian and Pacific Islander students

c. Education of Asian and Pacific Islander adult refugees

d. Dissemination of programs and information that include the values, heritage, language, culture, and history of Asian and Pacific Islanders

e. Recognition of Asian and Pacific Islander educators as role models.

The Association encourages opportunities to preserve, promote, and perpetuate Asian and Pacific Islander heritage and culture. (1979, 2001)

B-17. Education of Refugee Children and Children of Undocumented Immigrants

The National Education Association believes that, regardless of the immigration status of students or their parents, every student has the right to a free public education in an environment free from harassment. The Association also believes that the determination of legal residency status is the responsibility of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, not of educational systems or their employees.

The Association further believes that students who have resided in the United States for at least five years at the time of high school graduation should be granted amnesty by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, granted legal residency status, and allowed to apply for U.S. citizenship. (1980, 2001)

B-22. Educational Programs for Limited English Proficiency Students

The National Education Association believes that limited English proficiency (LEP) students must have available to them programs that address their unique needs and that provide equal opportunity to all students, regardless of their primary language. Programs for LEP students should emphasize English proficiency while concurrently providing meaningful instruction in all other curriculum areas.

The Association also believes that LEP students should be placed in bilingual education programs to receive instruction in their native language from qualified teachers until such time as English proficiency is achieved. If no bilingual programs are available, these students should be taught in English-as-a-second-language (ESL) programs designed to meet their specific needs. These students should be in classes that are limited in size; use methods such as weighted formulas; and provide additional staffing, modified scheduling, and/or curriculum design to accommodate the demands of each LEP student. Students should not be enrolled in special education classes solely because of linguistic differences.

The Association further believes that model bilingual education programs, in which language minority students demonstrate an increase in English language acquisition and academic achievement throughout the grade levels, should be promoted and supported at the federal, state, and local levels. Further, the Association advocates full funding of all instructional materials, resources, and programs for LEP students as well as professional development programs for education employees who work with these students. The school district or other appropriate agency should provide released time for the training of teachers who instruct LEP students.

Educators, through a bargaining or other bilateral decision-making process, must be fully involved in the development and implementation of programs serving these students, including the assignment of teachers and the terms and conditions of their employment. Teachers should be compensated at the teacher's hourly rate of pay for any additional time spent in training. They should also be reimbursed for the cost of tuition, textbooks, and travel incurred in such training.

The Association values bilingual and multilingual competence and supports programs that assist individuals in attaining and maintaining proficiency in their native language before and after they acquire proficiency in English. (1981, 2001)

B-31. Multicultural Education

The National Education Association believes that multiculturalism is the process of valuing differences and incorporating the values identified into behavior for the goal of achieving the common good. The Association also believes that multicultural education is a way of helping students perceive the cultural diversity of the United States so that they may develop pride in their own cultural legacy and awaken to the ideals embodied in the cultures of their neighbors. Multicultural education should promote the recognition of individual and group differences and similarities in order to reduce racism, homophobia, ethnic and all other forms of prejudice, and discrimination and to develop self-esteem as well as respect for others.

The Association further believes that multicultural education encompasses at least three things: an idea or concept, an educational reform movement, and a process. As an idea or concept, multicultural education assumes that all students can learn. As an educational reform movement, multicultural education seeks to develop an entire school environment that is inclusive of cultural considerations (e.g., curriculum, instructional materials, learning and testing, respect for cultural differences, etc.). As a process, the development of a multicultural school environment is ever evolving and ongoing. (1981, 2001)

B-36. Vocational Students Organizations

The National Education Association believes that vocational students organizations (VSOs) are an integral component of a quality vocational and technical education program. VSOs provide opportunities for leadership development, vocational preparation, and community involvement for secondary school students. Active participation in a VSO at the local, state, and national levels encourages young men and women to become better prepared for the multiple adult roles of wage earner, community leader, and family member. (2001)

B-40. Sex Education

The National Education Association believes that a developing child's sexuality is continually and inevitably influenced by daily contacts, including experiences in the school environment. The Association recognizes that sensitive sex education can be a positive force in promoting physical, mental, emotional, and social health and that the public school must assume an increasingly important role in providing the instruction. Teachers and health professionals must be qualified to teach in this area and must be legally protected from censorship and lawsuits.

The Association urges that formal sex education should include parent/guardian orientation and be planned and implemented with careful attention to developmental needs, appropriateness to community settings and values, and respect for individual differences.

The Association also believes that to facilitate the realization of human potential, it is the right of every individual to live in an environment of freely available information and knowledge about sexuality and encourages affiliates and members to support appropriately established sex education programs. Such programs should include information on sexual abstinence, birth control and family planning, diversity of culture, diversity of sexual orientation, parenting skills, prenatal care, sexually transmitted diseases, incest, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, homophobia, the effects of substance abuse during pregnancy, and problems associated with and resulting from pre-teen and teenage pregnancies. (1969, 2001)

B-49. Education on Peace and International Understanding

The National Education Association believes that the United States and the other nations of the world should promote peace and international understanding. Educational strategies for teaching peace should include the role of international and nongovernmental organizations in the peaceful resolution of conflict.

The Association also believes that educational materials should include activities dealing with peaceful resolution of conflict, the effects of nuclear weaponry and other weapons of mass destruction, strategies for disarmament, and methods to achieve peace. (1982, 2001)

B-54. Conflict Resolution Education

The National Education Association supports the adoption and use, at all educational levels, of proven conflict-resolution strategies, materials, and activities by school districts, education employees, students, parents/guardians, and the school community to encourage nonviolent resolution of interpersonal and societal conflicts. (1986, 2001)

B-57. Standardized Testing of Students

The National Education Association believes that standardized tests should only be used to improve the quality of education and instruction for students. Standardized tests are most useful when selected by educational professionals closest to the classroom and integrated with assessment information specific to local programs. Affiliates should advocate the design and use of a variety of developmentally appropriate assessment techniques that allow necessary accommodations, modifications, and exemptions and are bias-free, reliable, and valid. When a test is mandated at the state or the national level, it should only be used to evaluate programs toward meeting state or national standards and/or goals.

The Association opposes the use of standardized tests when—

a. Used as the criterion for the reduction or withholding of any educational funding

b. Results are used to compare students, teachers, programs, schools, communities, and states

c. Used as a single criterion for high-stakes decision-making

d. The results lead to sanctions or other punitive actions

e. Arbitrary standards of improvement are required

f. They do not match the motor skills and/or academic developmental levels or language proficiency of the student

g. Student scores are used to evaluate teachers or to determine compensation or employment status

h. Programs are specifically designed to teach to the test

i. Testing programs or tests limit or supplant instructional time

j. Every student is required to be tested every year

k. Students and parents/guardians are not provided with a complete report of the individual student's test results

l. Time required to administer the test exceeds reasonable and appropriate limits for the age of the student.

The administration of a standardized test includes the responsibility to educate the stakeholders in the purpose of the test, the meaning of test results, and the accurate interpretation of conclusions. The Association also believes that students, parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, schools, and school districts should not be penalized for parents/guardians exercising their legal rights to exempt their children from standardized tests. (1978, 2001)

B-61. Media

The National Education Association believes that the media have an effect on the education of the public. The Association also believes that the media have an obligation to provide full, constructive, balanced, and accurate presentations to the public. The Association supports the media's right to protect information and sources of information from mandated disclosures and search and seizure. Visual media, including the Association's, should include closed captioning for the hearing impaired and read-along captions on children's commercial and educational programs. (1969, 2001)

C. Promote the Health and Welfare of Children and/or Students

C-8. Community Violence

The National Education Association believes that children who are exposed to community violence are also its victims. Witnessing violence profoundly affects children's abilities to function at school, develop and maintain emotional stability, and establish healthy relationships.

The Association also believes that children who are bystanders to violence must receive the appropriate counseling and support from school and community resources. (2001)

C-18. Environmentally Safe Schools

The National Education Association believes that all educational facilities must have good indoor air quality, be smoke-free, and be safe from environmental and chemical hazards.

School districts should conduct periodic testing for harmful water and airborne particles/agents that are detrimental to the health of students and education employees and shall report the results publicly.

The Association also believes in the establishment and enforcement of standards of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to ensure health and safety.

The Association supports ongoing training and certification of education employees who work in potentially hazardous situations. This training must include proper handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials and instruction on Materials Safety Data Sheets (MSDS).

Additional health hazards should not be created when facilities are altered or repaired.

The Association further believes that school districts must post MSDS and OSHA standards. Students and/or their parents/guardians, education employees, and the public should be notified of actual and potential hazards. All stakeholders should be involved in developing a plan for corrective action. (1989, 2001)

C-23. Comprehensive School Health, Social, and Psychological Programs and Services

The National Education Association believes that every child should have direct and confidential access to comprehensive health, social, and psychological programs and services. Such programs and services must be interactive and coordinated within and between school, home, and community settings. School and community efforts must also be integrated to promote the well-being of children and youth and to build support for school and community health programs.

The Association also believes that schools should provide—

a. A healthful psychological climate and a safe physical environment

b. Food services that provide nutritious meals and support sound nutrition education that helps students to select nutritionally appropriate foods.

The Association further believes that programs in the schools should provide—

a. A planned, sequential, pre-K through 12 health education curriculum that integrates various health topics (such as drug abuse, violence, safety issues, universal precautions, and HIV education); that is taught by teachers specifically prepared to teach the subject; and that enables students to develop the essential knowledge and skills to maintain personal, family, and community health

b. A planned, sequential, pre-K through 12 physical education curriculum

c. Worksite health promotion to improve the health status of school staff to set an example for desired student behaviors.

The Association believes that services in the schools should include—

a. Counseling programs that provide developmental guidance and broad-based interventions and referrals that promote the physical and psychological health of students

b. Services that identify, diagnose, and resolve learning disabilities

c. Health services provided by a licensed professional school nurse that promote the health of students through prevention, case finding, early intervention, and remediation of specific health problems, that provide first aid and triage of illness and injuries, and that provide health counseling

d. A nurse-to-student ratio at each site that is appropriate to provide quality school health care

e. Comprehensive school-based, community-funded student health care clinics that provide basic health care services (which may include diagnosis and treatment) to supplement school nurses

f. If deemed appropriate by local choice, family-planning counseling and access to birth control methods with instruction in their use

g. Coordination with community agencies for support and follow-up activities.

The Association also believes that all health, social, and psychological services must be provided by appropriately licensed and certificated professional personnel. The Association further believes that education employees, parents/ guardians, students, and personnel from community agencies providing services to students must be involved in the development, implementation, and coordination of these services.

The Association urges its affiliates to support legislation to provide comprehensive care to all children and supports community, state, and national efforts to coordinate these services. (1969, 2001)

C-27. Safe and Orderly School Communities

The National Education Association believes that all education employees, parents/guardians, students, school governing boards, and community members and agencies must work cooperatively to establish and maintain safe and orderly school communities. Students and education employees must be safe from physical, verbal, and psychological violence, the threat thereof, and all forms of harassment. There must be procedures to prevent and eliminate all types of harassment that might occur. Plans and procedures regarding discipline and/or harassment must include due process.

The Association also believes that both schools and school districts must have written discipline plans and procedures that are fair, equitable, and consistently enforced as well as procedures for the safe and orderly conduct of school activities and events. The Association further believes that there must be written safety plans for crisis situations. Crisis plans must be developed at each school site by school personnel, administrators, students, parents/guardians, community members, and emergency personnel. Plans must include stress management/counseling strategies as follow-up care for students and staff when crisis situations occur. These crisis plans must be discussed with and practiced by all personnel and students at the school site. Crisis plans must be provided to police and fire departments and other community agencies that might be called upon in a crisis situation. Parents/guardians must be made aware of the existence of these crisis plans.

The Association believes that students must be taught strategies and skills, including conflict resolution, that develop respect, self-discipline, and self-control. Students must learn to distinguish between their own rights and responsibilities and the rights and responsibilities of others. There must be appropriate services and placement within regular education and alternative education programs and/or with state and/or community agencies for students who disrupt the learning environment or who are dangerous to other students, education employees, and themselves.

The Association also believes that appropriate school behavior begins and is reinforced in the home. Parents/guardians of children who are disruptive often need support and training in order to reduce inappropriate behavior and increase student learning. Programs that provide assistance and training in child development, effective parenting skills, and strategies for dealing with disruptive students must be available for parents/guardians. Schools can be instrumental in identifying and recommending strategies that can assist parents/guardians. (1994, 2001)

C-28. Student Sexual Orientation

The National Education Association believes that all persons, regardless of sexual orientation, should be afforded equal opportunity and guaranteed a safe and inclusive environment within the public education system. The Association also believes that, for students who are struggling with their sexual/gender orientation, every school district and educational institution should provide counseling services and programs that deal with high suicide and dropout rates and the high incidence of teen prostitution. These services and programs shall be staffed by trained personnel. (1988, 2001)

D. Promote Professional Excellence Among Educators

D-5. Teacher Preparation Programs: Affiliate Participation

The National Education Association believes that its affiliates and members should be involved in teacher education preparation and accreditation at the national, state, and local levels. The Association also believes that its affiliates and licensed educators with teaching experience should participate at the college/university level in the design, implementation, and improvement of teacher education programs. (1970, 2001)

D-6. Teacher Preparation Programs: Content and Evaluation

The National Education Association believes that teacher preparation programs must—

a. Involve practicing, licensed pre-K through adult education teachers in the design, implementation, evaluation, and systematic change of the program
b. Involve students preparing to teach in the evaluation and improvement of the program
c. Involve teacher educators who are licensed and practicing in their field of expertise and who also demonstrate practical knowledge of schools and classroom teaching
d. Include a policy of affirmative recruitment
e. Include tests, reports, student teaching, portfolio reviews, and other measures of performance designed to assess progress in acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary for effective teaching
f. Require courses in the liberal arts, subject or grade-level specialty, reading, methodologies for the instruction of students with limited English proficiency, and professional studies that include learning theories, curriculum design, classroom management, behavior management, discipline, student assessment, school accountability, school law, and teaching techniques
g. Include instruction and field experience in the uses of appropriate technology for managing and advancing instruction
h. Include instructional content and experience that address our multicultural, multi-ethnic diversity, recognize the contributions of ethnic and other minorities, and provide techniques for teaching culturally diverse students
i. Involve students preparing to teach in recognizing biases and acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge to assist them in creating a bias-free environment
j. Include instructional content and experience in research and information skills, group processes, shared decision making, strategic planning, the dynamics of intergroup communications, peace and conflict resolution, human growth and development, the changing role of the family, exceptional behaviors, and human relations
k. Include a variety of field experiences throughout the preparation program culminating in clinical practice
l. Include accurate instructional content on the evolution of professional teacher organizations and the advances in the areas of job contracts, salary schedules, benefit programs, and working conditions
m. Include instruction and practical experiences in the processes, strategies, realities, responsibilities, and challenges of shared decision making, problem-solving, and strategic planning
n. Include instructional content in awareness and educational programs of all special education areas recognized by federal law
o. Provide access to professional and preprofessional organizations related to the education profession and areas of certification
p. Be evaluated and accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)
q. Be funded at a level that ensures that NCATE accreditation is achieved and maintained. (1970, 2001)

D-10. Mentor Programs

The National Education Association believes that mentor programs are a means of enhancing the professional expertise of employees. The Association also believes that the planning, implementation, and evaluation of such programs must be negotiated or cooperatively developed and maintained by the school district and the local affiliate.

The Association further believes that the duties and responsibilities of all parties must be clearly defined and uniformly administered. Mentors must be selected through a defined process with articulated criteria, be properly trained and compensated, and be provided with adequate time to fulfill their responsibilities. The state or local authority has the obligation to provide hold-harmless protection.

The Association believes that any documentation and/or verbal conversations that result from the mentoring process must be confidential and the sole property of the person mentored and must not be included in the participant's personnel file. (1988, 2001)

D-23. Promote the Retention of Experienced Educators

The National Education Association believes that experienced educators are valuable resources in the promotion of educational excellence. The Association also believes that our experienced members should be encouraged to remain in the education profession and that such members should be appropriately compensated through the negotiations process or, in non-bargaining jurisdictions, through legislation or other means. (2001)

E. Gain Recognition of the Basic Importance of the Teacher in the Learning Process and Other Employees in the Educational Effort

E-2. Time To Teach

The National Education Association believes that "time to teach" refers not only to those hours during which an educator is actually teaching but also applies to those conditions that contribute to the student-teacher relationship. These include a reasonable, carefully defined work load, a duty-free lunch period, an office in which to work, access to telephones, adequate and appropriate office equipment, access to technology, freedom from interruptions during instructional time, unencumbered planning time, time to evaluate student progress, time for implementation of federal and state legislative requirements, and elimination of the noninstructional tasks required of a teacher.

The Association also believes that, at all levels and in all disciplines, additional common planning time should be provided during the student day for employees to meet for such purposes as, but not limited to, planning interdisciplinary activities/units, team planning time, and coordinating with special education and with support professionals.

The Association recognizes that accountability requires reporting on the uses of funding derived from federal, state, and local education programs. The Association further believes, however, that in order for the classroom educator to spend adequate time on instructional duties, the paperwork burden on the practitioner must be reduced and held to an absolute minimum.

The Association believes that educators need the freedom and flexibility to schedule time and design programs to meet the needs of students. (1969, 2001)

F. Protect the Rights of Education Employees and Advance their Interests and Welfare

F-10. Minimum Criteria for Additional Compensation Beyond the Single Salary Schedule

The National Education Association is opposed to the use of merit pay or performance pay compensation systems. However, the Association believes that any system that provides additional compensation to education employees beyond that provided by the single salary schedule should meet the following minimum criteria:

a. The design of the system must be accomplished through the collective bargaining process or in nonbargaining jurisdictions it should be incorporated into legislation, employer policy, and/or other sources that establish the terms and conditions of employment for education employees
b. Any additional compensation beyond a single salary schedule must not be based on education employee evaluation, student performance, or attendance
c. The criteria that are used to determine whether education employees receive the additional compensation should be clearly stated and subject to objective measurement. The system also should make clear how those criteria relate to the school district's educational objectives
d. The system should not directly or indirectly limit the number of education employees who are eligible for the additional compensation. All education employees should be afforded a fair opportunity to meet the requisite standards and should receive the additional compensation if they do
e. Full funding should be available to sustain the system. The allocation of funds to provide the additional compensation should not prevent increases in the basic compensation for all education employees
f. The system should not diminish the professional status of those education employees who do not receive the additional compensation or in any way suggest that such education employees are not qualified for the positions that they hold. (2001)

F-11. Benefits

The National Education Association believes that benefit structures should be subject to collective bargaining or, in nonbargaining jurisdictions, incorporated into legislation, employer policy, and/or other sources that establish the terms and conditions of employment. The Association also believes that all education employees should be eligible for benefits that include but are not limited to—

a. Comprehensive insurance programs
   1. Health
   2. Dental
   3. Vision
   4. Hearing
   5. Life
   6. Legal
   7. Workers' compensation
   8. Long-term physical and mental disability
b. Paid leaves
   1. Sick leave with unlimited accumulation
   2. Personal leave with unlimited accumulation
   3. Bereavement leave
   4. Parental leave, including adoption
   5. Dependent care leave
   6. Sabbatical leave
   7. Professional leave
   8. Association leave
   9. Religious leave
c. Additional remuneration
   1. Severance pay
   2. Tuition reimbursement
   3. Retirement compensation
   4. Unemployment compensation
   5. Benefit extension for laid-off employees
d. Personal assistance
   1. Personal assault protection, and in the event of assault, counseling services and leave that is not subject to sick or personal leave
   2. Employee assistance program
   3. Reimbursement for damages to or loss of personal property at work site
   4. Child care center
   5. An opportunity to participate in a cafeteria-type plan or plan authorized by Section 125 of the U.S. Federal Tax Code.

The Association further believes that education employees and their spouses, domestic partners, and/or dependents should have equal access to all benefits applicable to them.

The Association believes that comprehensive insurance programs should be provided for education employees on official leave of absence or parental leave.

The Association also believes that provisions should be made for retirees, their spouses, domestic partners, and/or dependents at their option to continue in the comprehensive health, dental, hearing, and vision programs.

The Association further believes that, if school districts consolidate or separate, education employees should not lose their tenure or have their salary, benefits, or seniority reduced. (1969, 2001)

F-15. Continuing Employment and Fair Dismissal Practices

The National Education Association believes that security of position must be provided for all education employees through appropriate employment policies, including fair dismissal procedures. The laws and master contracts governing said procedures must afford all education employees, including probationary employees, procedural and substantive due process.

The Association also believes that state laws must provide for the continuing employment and/or tenure of state and/or local education employees and that federal laws must provide similar protection for education employees in federal schools. (1969, 2001)

F-46. Save Harmless/Education Employee Liability

The National Education Association believes that educational institutions should—

a. Provide legal liability protection for education employees when their duties include physical assistance to students
b. Pay all costs—including attorneys' fees, expenses, and damages—incurred by employees and other agents in defending any civil action arising out of acts or omissions occurring during the performance of their duties
c. Reimburse employees and other agents for all costs incurred in defending any criminal action arising out of acts or omissions occurring during the performance of their duties, provided that said action terminates in favor of the accused.

The Association recommends that educational institutions attempt to secure appropriate insurance to provide the aforesaid payment and reimbursement. (1976, 2001)

F-56. Retirement

The National Education Association shall provide leadership in retirement issues and believes that state and local retirement systems and programs should include—

a. Autonomous and independent boards of trustees with at least a majority elected by and from the membership and must include a minimum of one retired member. These boards should also have the ability to hire their own staff
b. Retirement boards will be in charge of administering benefits as well as investments
c. Actuarial and investment policies that produce sound financing
d. Assets of the retirement system be used for the sole benefit of the beneficiaries of the system. Any other proposal to use the assets of a retirement system be adopted only if it is determined that it will have no negative actuarial impact on the system
e. All member pension plans, except higher education, have as a basis an adequate and fully funded defined benefit plan
f. Immediate and full vesting after not more than five years of service
g. Annual independent review and audit
h. Provisions for employee contributions to be a percentage of total compensation, not to exceed the amount contributed by employers. The employer may pay part or all of the employee contribution
i. Provisions permitting the purchase of credit earned while a member of another retirement system
j. Provisions permitting the purchase of credit for sabbatical leaves, maternity/paternity/adoption leaves, and any other approved leaves of absences
k. Normal retirement of at least 50 percent of the highest single year's rate of salary after 20 years of creditable service or at age 55 if fully vested, where actuarially sound, and with provisions that guarantee the employee with full benefits earned from all sources. Voluntary retirement should follow the same provisions
l. Disability retirement for a service-connected disability available to education employees from the first day of employment. Nonservice-connected disability retirement shall be available after five years of service. The benefit formula for disability retirement should yield benefits comparable to those of normal retirement
m. Automatic cost-of-living increases, without regard to age, to maintain purchasing power for retirees and beneficiaries
n. A joint federal-state program to provide those who have been employed in two or more states, in Overseas Dependents Schools, or in other government schools with benefits substantially the same as they would have received if they had retired after a career in one state. Affiliates are urged to support state statutes and proposed federal legislation or any program providing portability coverage
o. Full funding and equitable administration in the granting of retirement credit for service in the military, the Peace Corps, or Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) or provision for purchasing up to five years of retirement credit for service in the military, the Peace Corps, or VISTA
p. Nondiscrimination on the basis of gender or marital status
q. Retirement credit for unused sick leave
r. All compensation, including extra-duty pay, in computing retirement benefits
s. Benefits not reduced by other sources of income, including Social Security benefits
t. Pre-retirement counseling
u. Retirement housing facilities that are funded from sources other than those designated for retirement benefits
v. Education employees' contributions and benefits that are not subject to federal income taxation
w. Nondiscriminatory Internal Revenue Service rules and regulations
x. An annual financial statement distributed to all members
y. Tax-sheltered annuity and deferred compensation plans with a broad choice of programs available to all members. These plans should have actuarial tables that do not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, or national origin
z. Provisions to purchase pension credit for any previous Department of Defense teaching service
aa. Fully paid comprehensive health insurance, including reimbursement for Medicare Part B premiums, for retired education employees, their spouses, domestic partners, and/or dependents
bb. Benefits that are free from double taxation or source taxation by states for retirees living outside of the state where the benefits were earned
cc. All retirement benefits for spouses equally available for domestic partners
dd. Benefit formulas that provide full-year credit for each school year worked and provide that credit regardless of the number of hours worked per day. (1969, 2001)

G. Secure Professional Autonomy

NONE

H. Unite Education Employees for Effective Citizenship

H-3. The Right To Vote

The National Education Association believes that the principle of one-person—one-vote must apply at all levels of government, including the election of the President of the United States.

The Association recognizes the right to vote as a constitutional right guaranteed to all eligible citizens. The Association supports the continued maintenance of the provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The Association also supports voting and absentee provisions that are simplified, accurate, and reliable for all elections. The Association further supports voter education programs and uniform registration requirements without restrictive residency provisions. (1971, 2001)

I. Promote and Protect Human and Civil Rights

I-9. Human Rights

The National Education Association believes that the governments of all nations must respect and protect the basic human and civil rights of every individual, including equal access to education. The Association condemns any action that limits or prohibits the free and responsible exercise of these rights and believes that all education employees must lead in the effort to prevent any encroachment on basic human and civil rights. The Association also believes that the U.S. government should withhold all forms of military aid to governments that violate these rights.

The Association further believes that violence is abhorrent. The Association also condemns violence, as well as the tolerance of violence, and believes that all nations must pass and enforce measures to curtail and prevent actions and practices that inflict pain, suffering, mutilation, or death; and offer asylum to those threatened by such actions.

The Association expresses concern that the utilization of trade sanctions on food and medical supplies by any nation of the world to achieve political objectives fails to adequately consider the possible humanitarian impact of those policies on the civilian populations of the affected nations, particularly the young, the elderly, and the poor.

The Association deplores the holding of hostages, all forms of torture, and the taking of human life in the name of making a political statement. The Association believes that it is the responsibility of all governments to discourage such actions by individuals or groups of individuals.

The Association calls upon all nations to release all education employees and students who are being held without charge and to refrain from the use of coercion and arbitrary detention to punish the people of a specific area of their territories.

The Association further condemns the practice of capital punishment in nations without judicial safeguards such as the presumption of innocence and/or the right to counsel.

The Association also expresses concern that the practice of capital punishment in the United States impacts individuals disproportionately on the basis of social class, race, ethnicity, and gender. (1977, 2001)

I-25. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

The National Education Association believes that Martin Luther King, Jr. Day should be a state holiday in every state to focus on the importance of human relations. The Association encourages the observance of this day to promote good will among all people. (1969, 2001)

I-28. Victims of a Crime

The National Education Association believes that victims of a crime should be treated with dignity and compassion, without the fear of intimidation. Victims and their families should be notified of and have the right to be present/represented at all hearings and legal proceedings involving the defendant/perpetrator.

The Association also believes that it is a violation of the victims' right to privacy to release the names of the victims. The Association further believes that victims and their families must be made aware of and have free access to necessary services/programs. These services/programs must be funded by the appropriate government agencies. (1987, 2001)

I-30. Veterans Day

The National Education Association believes that children and people of this nation should honor and memorialize the sacrifices and heroic acts of the men and women who have served in the Armed Forces. Veterans Day should be maintained as a legal holiday. Students should be taught the importance and magnitude of the sacrifices made by service men and women in the protection of the United States during war and peace. Affiliates and school systems should plan observances to promote the celebration of veterans' courage, patriotism, and sacrifice for every member of society. (2001)

I-35. Disabilities Awareness

The National Education Association believes that the human and civil rights of students, education employees, and community members with disabilities must be protected. The Association encourages its affiliates to educate their own members and the public at large to bring about an awareness of disability issues. (1999, 2001)

J. Obtain for its Members the Benefits of an Independent, United Education Profession

J-5. Student Member Participation

The National Education Association believes that eligible students should have the opportunity to join the Association. The Association also believes that students should be encouraged to participate in the Association at the local, state, and national levels. Preprofessional and leadership training should be priorities.

The Association further believes that its members should promote membership in the NEA Student Program to all eligible students, including student teachers in members' classrooms. The Association believes that advisors of NEA Student chapters should be members of the Association. (1991, 2001) ✔

One in four of the delegates to this year's NEA Representative Assembly were minority group members, records show.

The NEA bylaws say that each state's delegation should have at least the same proportion of minority delegates as the minority share in the state's population.

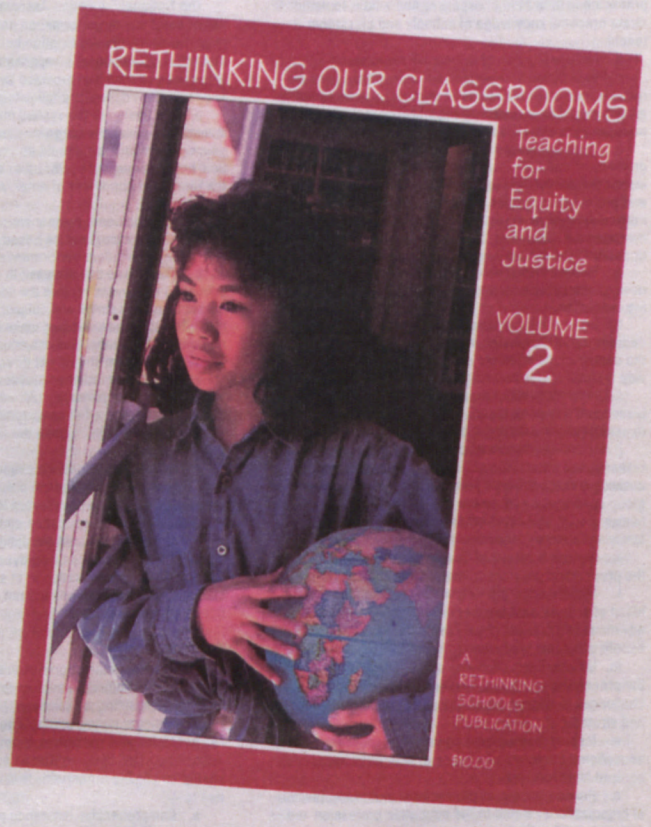
This provision grew out of the belief of the delegates that public school educators and their organizations should, as much as possible, reflect the nation and the nation's students.

Forty-one state affiliates met this target in 2001, one more state than in 2000. The NEA provides assistance to states which are unable to reach the target three years in a row.

For more: Contact Pat Williams-Freedman at 202-822-7789 or by E-mail at PWilliams-F@nea.org.

Educators Defying the Odds

Taking the non-traditional route to school reform isn't always easy, but the payoff can be worth the trip.



EXCERPT

"All good teaching begins with a respect for children, their innate curiosity and their capacity to learn. Curriculum should be rooted in children's needs and experiences. Whether we're teaching science, mathematics, English, or social studies, ultimately the class has to be about the students' lives as well as about a particular subject. Students should probe the ways their lives connect to the broader society, and are often limited by that society."

RETHINKING OUR CLASSROOMS: Teaching for Equity and Justice, VOL. 2

Bill Bigelow, Brenda Harvey, Stan Karp, and Larry Miller, editors
A Rethinking Schools Publication
244 pp. $10

If you believe the primary responsibility of a teacher is to teach children how to think, rather than to pencil in the right bubbles on a standardized, multiple-choice test, then you will love this book.

In the most practical and creative pieces in this collection of essays, teachers walk us through how they took on a classroom challenge and used it to teach their students how to question reality and act upon what they have learned.

What does a teacher do when faced with textbooks that are so bland that they drain all life out of the past, even the civil rights struggle, and fail utterly to engage our students?

High School teacher Mark Sweeting tells how he took the textbook headline "Nation Relocates Japanese-Americans," and engaged his students, using the antiseptic word "relocates" as a jumping-off point for a serious discussion of what really happened: The Japanese-Americans were arrested, their property was confiscated, and they were loaded, at gunpoint, onto buses and trains and transported to internment camps far from their homes.

What do you do when the issue of race surfaces in your classroom? Do you pretend it is not there, like the rhinoceros in the living room, and move quickly on to a less emotionally charged subject? Or do you confront it?

Kindergarten teacher Alejandro Segura-Mora details what he did after one of the darkest-skinned students in his class blurted out: "Maestro, my mom is giving me pills to turn me white."

What do you do if a student or a student's parent dies? Do you remain silent? Is death, like racism or poverty, an unfit subject for the classroom?

Elementary school teacher Kate Lyman relates how she ignored her principal's advice and talked directly with her students about the death of their classmate Jessica, eliciting from the children a number of excellent ways to remember her.

Rethinking Our Classrooms is a book which recognizes that creating a classroom of hope, like teaching itself, is a complex and demanding task. And by providing the testimonies of terrific teachers who have succeeded, it inspires and informs us.

—David Sheridan

BOOKS by NEA Members

Class Encounters
By Mark Meuser

Starting with his nerve-racking first day of teaching, Meuser takes us through his 27- year teaching career and shares what he has learned from his students. Some stories are humorous, while others describe the problems faced by students. Meuser shows the importance of good teacher-student relations and how they can lead to real success in schools. $17.95 Order from: Rivercross Publishing, Inc., 6214 Wynfield Court, Orlando, FL 32819, or call 407/876-7720.

By the Neck Until Dead: The Gallows of Nuremberg
By Stanley Tilles with Jeffrey Denhart

Lieutenant Stanley Tilles shares his story for the first time as the last living witness of the executions of German war criminals at Landsberg and Nuremberg. With the help of writer Jeffrey Denhart, his graphic account of this historical event includes previously unknown facts and original pictures. $12.95, plus $2 s&h from JoNa Books, Box 336, Bedford, IN 47421 or check the Web at www.kiva.net/~jonabook.

Leaving This Life Behind
By Howard Levine

Levine, a special education teacher for over 20 years, writes a unique novel exploring life after death through the intricately woven narratives of Sharon, a mother who dies too young; Paul, a father who struggles with life; and their three year-old son Kenny, who is learning disabled. $14.95, available at your local bookstore or call Creative Arts Book Company at 800/848-7789.

Character Kaleidoscope: A Practical, Standards-Based Resource Guide for Character Development
By Mirka Christesen with Susan Wasilewski

This resourceful guide is full of creative ideas that will integrate character development into your middle or high school curriculum. Written by two teachers who helped make the Wake County, North Carolina public school system a National School of Character, the guide includes reproducible worksheets, lesson plans, and lists of resources. $29.95 from National Professional Resources, Inc., 25 South Regent Street, Port Chester, NY, 10573, 800/453-7461.

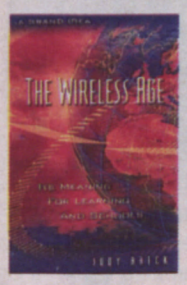
FREE OR INEXPENSIVE

Mind Puzzling

Find more than 90 great ways to stretch your students' skills in mathematical problem solving with Mesmerizing Math Puzzles by Rodolfo Kurchan. This creative brain-teasing book combines basic math skills, geometric shapes and figures, and games using pentominoes (12 figures shaped by connecting 5 squares end to end) to help your students manipulate numbers in new and exciting ways. 96 pp., $6.95 from Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016, phone 800/805-5489, or visit www.sterlingpub.com.

Connect with the Internet

Bring the infinite resources of the Internet into your classroom with this informative and insightful guide for educators. Be an innovator in the race for knowledge in your classroom with Judy Breck as she explores the endless possibilities of Internet technology in education through her book The Wireless Age: Its Meaning for Learning and Schools. 128 pp., $19.95 from Scarecrow Education, 4720 Boston Way, Lanham, MD 20706, phone 800/462-6420, Web site www.scarecroweducation.com.

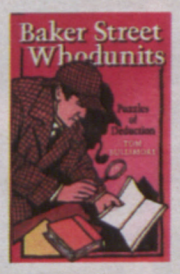


Growing Up Is Hard To Do

The growing pressures of today's fast paced, technological communities have placed new pressures on children like never before. Learn to identify these dangers with internationally recognized child development expert, David Elkind, in The Hurried Child: Growing Up Too Fast Too Soon. This third edition print describes the latest harmful pressures facing children today and prescribes solutions that will help alleviate the stresses of growing up in the 21st century. 288 pp., $16.00 from Perseus Publishing. To order call 800/255-1514.

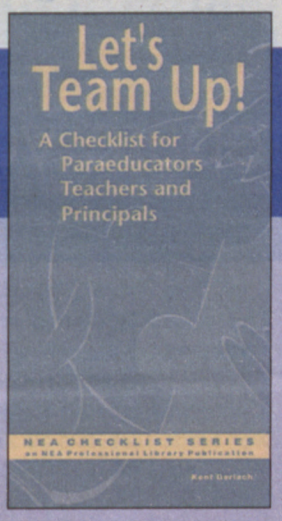
Unsolved Mysteries

Join world-class detective Sherlock Holmes and his trusty assistant Dr. Watson as they crack cases and unravel mysteries. You'll find more than 80 adventure-filled problems to solve in Tom Bullimore's Baker Street Whodunits: Puzzles of Deduction that will keep kids and adults entertained for hours. "The team at 221B Baker Street is waiting for you!" 95 pp., $6.95 from Sterling Publishing Co, Inc. To order call 800/805-5489 or visit www.sterlingpub.com.



Our Green Earth

Whether it's the air we breath, the food we eat, or questions about plants and animals that we never thought about, the authors bring you easy directions for kids to follow and have all their questions answered. 127 pp., $10.95 from Sterling Publishing Co., Inc. To order call 800/805-5489 or visit www.sterlingpub.com.



NEW from the NEA Professional Library

Let's Team Up: A Checklist for Paraeducators, Teachers and Principals
Kent Gerlach
64 pp., $5.50 NEA members
$6.95 nonmembers
#2163-0-00-FN

This unique checklist is written to help paraeducators, teachers, and principals understand their roles and responsibilities as they relate to each other. It's filled with helpful tips for teachers on working effectively with paraeducators, practical suggestions for paraeducators on clarifying their jobs and their relationships with students and school staff, and great advice for principals on the administrative supervision of paraeducators.

To order, call 800/229-4200, or check the Web at www.nea.org/books.

EXCERPT

A Winning Team

The interdependent working relationship of today's paraeducators, teachers, and principals is often like a jigsaw puzzle. Unfortunately, they don't have a picture on the front of a box to know what the puzzle is supposed to look like when it's finished. The most successful schools operate as a team. School personnel understand the importance of a good working relationship and are focused on team goals. They form relationships that are built on good communication, trust, respect, and recognition. When paraeducators, teachers, and principals team up to connect the pieces of the puzzle, students are the ultimate beneficiaries.

The Truth Test

By Lori Pollard-Johnson

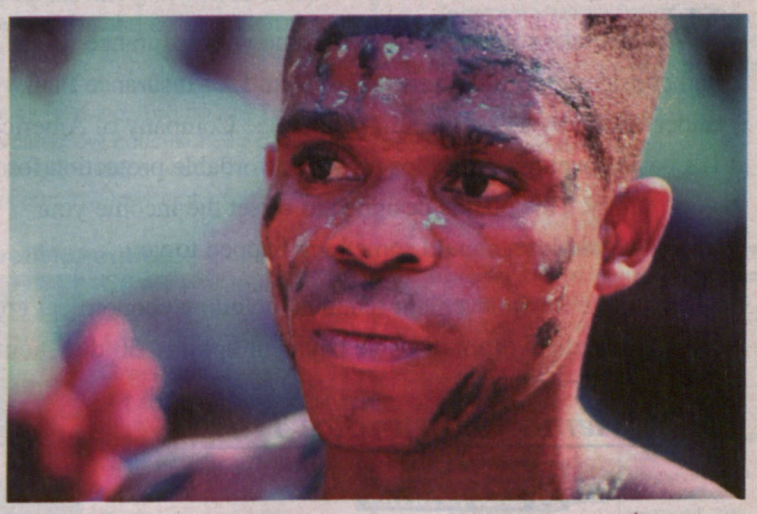
Teacher and writer Pollard-Johnson brings you a delightful story about the new boy in school who learns the true meaning of friends and how to be a friend, the hard way. 75 pp., $5.90 plus s&h. To order, contact Perfection Learning Corporation Customer Service at 800/831-4190 and ask for Item No. 5902801.

TVTIPS

Africa

PBS, September 8, check local listings.

PBS and National Geographic present an eight-part series that explores the African continent through the eyes of Africans. From the Rift Valley to the deserts of the north, from the rainforests of Cameroon to rugged Ethiopia, from the coast of Swahili to the changing climate of South Africa, the program examines the diverse people, cultures, religions, art, history, and wildlife of Africa. ✔



You try to prepare your students for tomorrow.

But what about your family?

No one knows better than you how difficult it is to balance being a parent *and* a teacher. And, since this time of year is so busy, trying to juggle both may sometimes cause you to postpone making important decisions.

Why not take some time to reexamine your insurance needs and consider enrolling in the NEA Term Life Insurance Plan, underwritten by The Prudential Insurance Company of America. It's basic coverage that helps provide affordable protection for your family. This plan is designed to offset the income your family would lose, should something happen to you.

There are many convenient features including economical group rates, no medical exam, flexible payment options, 30-day money back guarantee, and coverage for your spouse or domestic partner,* and children. In fact, by requesting your application package today, you'll take an important step towards safeguarding your loved ones.

Start this school year prepared for your students and your family.

To get your easy application today, call 1-800-637-4636 or visit www.neamb.com And to help you make the right life insurance decisions, we'll also send you our valuable, fact-filled guide "The Nine Principles of Buying the Right Life Insurance," for FREE.

NEA Members Insurance Trust®

nea Member Benefits

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NEA Term Life Insurance is underwritten by The Prudential Insurance Company of America, 751 Broad Street, Newark, NJ 07102. Contract Series: 83500. Residents of Mississippi please call for availability. *Domestic partners are not qualified as dependents in Georgia.

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TV TIPS

Valley of the T-Rex

Discovery Channel
Sunday, September 9, 9:00-10:00 p.m. ET, check local listings.

Dr. Jack Horner, renowned paleontologist, travels into Hell Creek in the badlands of Montana in search of the largest complete skeleton of a Tyrannosaurus Rex ever uncovered and discovers the remains of other creatures that once populated the valley, evidence that leads him to question the conventional theories regarding the Tyrannosaurus Rex. With the use of fossil finds and computer animation, the world of the T-Rex is brought to life, explored, and questioned.

Band of Brothers

HBO, Sundays, beginning September 9, 9:00 p.m. ET, check local listings.

Based on Stephen E. Ambrose's nonfiction book about a World War II U.S. Army unit, and drawn from hours of interviews with survivors, along with the letters and journals of the soldiers, this ten-part miniseries tells the story of Easy Company. Beginning with their rigorous training in Georgia in 1942, the series follows the 506th Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division, which parachuted into France early on D-Day morning, fought in the Battle of the Bulge, and captured Hitler's Eagle's Nest at Berchtesgaden. For support and outreach materials, visit www.hbo.com.

Don Quixote

Hallmark Channel
September 16, check local listings.

Jon Lithgow stars in this adaptation of Cervante's Don Quixote as the passionate, but foolhearty romantic who loves his books about knighthood and chivalry so much he can't separate them from reality. In an attempt to cling to the old stories that his books tell him, he outfits himself in armor and sets off on an epic journey accompanied by his faithful squire, Sancho Panza, to find his true love, lady Dulcinea. Don Quixote travels the Spanish countryside, fighting both real and imagined enemies, leaving him bruised and battered, but no wiser.

Hispanic Power

CNN, CNN Newsroom
September 17, 4:30-5:00 a.m. ET, check local listings.

According to census projections, Hispanic-Americans will make up the largest minority population in the United States in the very near future. This CNN Newsroom presentation explores the dramatic shift in U.S. population, the effects on both Hispanic and non-Hispanic teenagers, as well as the growing Hispanic power base in the areas of businesses, politics, the arts, and more.

Evolution

PBS
September 24-27, 8:00 p.m. ET, check local listings.

This eight-hour series travels around the world to examine evolutionary science and its profound effect on society and culture. Darwin's theory of natural selection, the vast changes that spawned the tree of life, the role of mass extinction, and the power of sex to drive evolutionary change are examined. This series also addresses the emergence of the consciousness, the success of humans, and the perceived conflict between science and religion in understanding human life. A companion Web site at www.pbs.org/evolution contains links to resources, answers to questions, and interactive online lessons.

English Composition: Writing for an Audience

PBS, check local listings.

Two sequences make up this series of 26 half-hour programs for upper level students. The first sequence, "Thinking/Writing," shows how arguments, narratives, and definitions can be used with critical thinking to improve communication in a variety of genres. "Writing Process" considers the nature of writing as a continuous process, along with the development of a personal voice, reading as a writer and a thinker, and using quotations and citations.

People Like Us: Social Class in America

PBS, September 23, 9:00-11:00 p.m. ET, check local listings.

This special takes a direct look at social class, something most Americans never think about, but which can affect their lives more than ethnicity or appearance. The companion Web site at pbs.org/classinamerica provides lesson plans for math, health, and social studies, and links to other resources, along with an opportunity to test preconceptions about who belongs where on the social scale and ideas about how social class works in America.

School

PBS
September 6, 9:00 p.m. ET, check local listings.

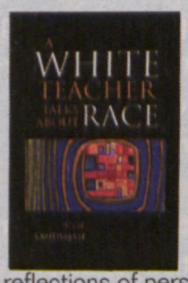
Narrated by Meryl Streep, this four-part series examines American education from an historical perspective, beginning with the spread of tax-supported public schooling in the 19th century. Other episodes consider the education of immigrant students, the struggle for equal educational opportunity, and the recent wave of school reform led by politicians, free-marketers, and business leaders.

In the Mix—Steroids

PBS, September, check local listings.

This half-hour television magazine show for young adults explores the dangers involved in the use of steroids by teens, both boys and girls, to enhance athletic performance or physical appearance.

FREE OR INEXPENSIVE



Celebrating Diversity

Julie Landsman leads readers through a day at school in *A White Teacher Talks About Race* as she recounts reflections of personal experiences and stories of extraordinary students who have made up the diverse classrooms where she taught for over 25 years. Their stories of the hardships and struggles facing minorities today also bring hope and celebration for ethnic diversity and the benefits of a cross-cultural education that enhances learning. 160 pp., $22.95 from Scarecrow Education. To order call 800/462-6420 or visit www.scarecroweducation.com.

I Love Museums!

Off the Wall Museum Guides For Kids: Modern Art and Greek and Roman Art are great pocket guides for kids to carry along on their trip to the museum. Ruthie Knapp and Janice Lehmberg create a resource filled with easy to read explanations and pointers on how to look at art. Filled with pictures and creative

The Word Is Out.

"National Board Certification addresses professionalism in teaching .... It's a tool that the profession really needs."
USA Today, October 19, 2000, article

"National Board Certification is the country's highest teaching honor. When teachers are good, students are more motivated, parents are more engaged and (a school) administration's work is ... less daunting."
Los Angeles Daily News, December 8, 2000, editorial

"Good teachers hold the key to student success .... National Board Certified Teachers and their students significantly outperform their ... peers."
Charlotte Observer, January 5, 2001, editorial columnist

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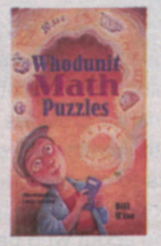
ideas to make your next trip to any museum even more fun and exciting. 72 pp., $9.95 each from Sterling Publishing Co., Inc. To order call 800/805-5489 or visit www.sterlingpub.com.

Knowing Your Math

See how Police Chief Arthur Smart and his math-whiz partner, 12 year-old junior detective Cal Q. Leiter, cleverly solve Midville's most mathematically challenging crimes in *Whodunit Math Puzzles* by Bill Wise. By manipulating their own math skills, your students can also figure out how Cal knew that the chief's cousin was getting short-changed by a carnival vendor or how Cal could be sure who the predictable burglar was going to rob next. 96 pp., $14.95 (hardcover) from Sterling Publishing Co., Inc. To order call 800/805-5489 or visit www.sterlingpub.com.



Small Schools in Big Cities

Robert E. Newman, Emeritus Professor of Education at Syracuse University, proposes a "small is beautiful" model for public and charter schools. This novel approach helps teachers create an effective learning environment through open interactions and honest conversations with students that will build a mutual respect and desire for learning. *Building Urban Little Schools* is a detailed guideline to achieve a quality, life-changing environment for public education. 325 pp., $21.95 (free s&h) from Brookline Books. Order toll free at 800/666-BOOK or send payment to P.O. Box 381047, Cambridge, MA 02238.

A report card we're proud to share.

Visa is proud to sponsor the Practical Money Skills for Life program. It was developed with educators, for educators. The comprehensive money management curriculum and resources are teacher tested, and teacher approved.

Educators can download or order, free of charge, all of the educational materials on the website — including lesson plans. A CD-ROM and videotape are also available. And all materials are provided in both English and Spanish.

It's a great resource for teachers and students.

We're proud that so many education professionals have given Practical Money Skills for Life such high marks.

Check it out for yourself and see if its right for your classroom, www.practicalmoneyskills.com.

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"In the past we'd just give students a diploma and a transcript — no longer— we're preparing you to be a good citizen and this practical money management program is excellent." — Charles Cwierko

"The site's fantastic, I really enjoy it. The interactivity is helpful and all of the materials being available online for a teacher is outstanding." — Dave Bradley

"It's great! It has great teacher resources. I can't wait to get my high school kids started on using it. . . ." — Mary Eckert

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www.practicalmoneyskills.com

This Is My Classroom

Children want to feel like they belong, especially in their own classroom. In *Belonging: Creating Community in the Classroom*, Mona Hajjar Halaby describes how she brought a true sense of community to her classroom through weekly class meetings on the rug where anger, hurts, concerns, and triumphs were shared with each other. Make your classroom a place where kids learn to depend on one another and take responsibility for changing their attitudes. Learn how this model was developed and how to facilitate class meetings to build a community in your classroom. 156 pp., $19.95 (free s&h) from Brookline Books. Order toll free at 800/666-BOOK.

Videotapes Found

Educators Progress Service, Inc. has just released the 2001-2002 editions of *Educators Guide to Free Videotapes*, one for elementary/middle school educators and another for high school and adult audiences. Designed to make the search for free educational videotapes easier for busy teachers, each edition provides a description, running time, and suggested grade level for over a thousand videotapes. $36.95 each, available on 15-day free trial basis. Check www.freeteachingaids.com for special discounts. For more information, write or call Educators Progress Service, Inc., 214 Center Street, Randolph, WI 53956, 888/951-4469.

Creative Classrooms

Tired of all the testing requirements being placed on your students? Then get your hands on a free 30-minute video and teaching guide aimed at turning your classroom into a truly creative learning environment. The goal is to make teaching exciting and create learning environments that inspire kids to succeed. Disney Learning Partnership recently released *The Power of the Creative Classroom*, which is volume two of

DIVERSITY Calendar

September

Hispanic Heritage Month, September 15-October 15
Hispanic Heritage Month begins on Mexico's Independence Days, September 15 and 16, celebrating a rich cultural heritage that traces its roots back to America's indigenous peoples as well as the first Spanish explorers to reach America. Go to www.education-world.com/a_lesson/lesson023.shtml to find additional ideas and links to celebrate Hispanic contributions to American culture.

International Day of Peace, September 18
International Day of Peace is celebrated on the third Tuesday of each September, the opening day of the U.N. General Assembly. Students in countries all over the world take a minute of silence at 12 noon at their local time zone to support the United Nations in its mission of world peace. More information from Public Inquiries Unit, Room GA-57, United Nations, New York, NY 10017, 212/963-4475.

October

Mahatma Gandhi's Birthday, October 2
One of three holidays celebrated universally by all regions in India. Born in 1869 and assassinated in 1948, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was an Indian leader whose nonviolent resistance movement set an example for the world. Find more information on his life and times on the Government of India's Ministry of External Affairs Web site at www.meadev.gov.in/Gandhi/intro.htm.

Make a Difference Day, October 27
A day to encourage children, youth, and adults to help a neighbor and care about the community through volunteering. Sponsored by USA Weekend and Points of Light Foundation. For more information go to www.usaweekend.com/diffday/about-madd.html.

the Creative Classroom Series, produced in collaboration with Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. To request a copy, e-mail Disney.Learning@disney.com or write to The Creative Classroom Series, c/o Disney Learning Partnership, 500 So. Buena Vista Street, Burbank, CA, 91521-6326.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Music Education
Folgers Coffee and the GRAMMY Foundation have announced "*Wakin' Up the Music*" Education Program aimed at waking up the full potential in every child through early music education.

The GRAMMY Foundation is a branch of The Recording Academy dedicated to advancing music and arts-based education across the country. The program includes a curriculum distributed to elementary school teachers and cash awards to recognize and reward excellence in elementary school music education programs. To participate, you must submit an application and survey online via the Folgers.com Web site. See www.Folgers.com. All registered schools will receive a "Wakin' Up the Music" Education Kit.

Visual Learning Program
A significant percentage of all learning in the early, say first 12, years of life comes from visual stimulation. Given this natural propensity to learn by seeing, Polaroid Corporation developed a program for educators to help them teach students through visual learning. *The Polaroid Education Program* (PEP) takes a creative approach to help students understand and communicate through the use of photographs. It consists of six modes of learning that serve as a framework for the various ways photographs can be used in classrooms, addressing all areas of the curriculum—exploring, recording, communicating, expressing, motivating, and imagining. For more information about PEP and the workshops offered by the program, visit www.polaroidwork.com/education or call 781-386-5090.

Violence Prevention
Just as violence is a learned behavior, violence prevention can be learned as well. *ACT—Adults and Children Together—Against Violence* is a new multimedia campaign designed to help caregivers of children up to age 8 the tools to teach violence prevention.

The initiative, created by the American Psychological Association, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and the Advertising Council, seeks to empower communities to distribute information and skills on violence prevention, choose violence prevention resources, and develop their own early childhood nonviolence action plans. For more information, see their Web site at www.ACTagainstviolence.org.

Get Kids Growing
There's free help available if you bring together a group of kids interested in gardening.

The National Gardening Association, based in Burlington, Vermont, announces its 19th annual *Youth Garden Grants Program*. Groups of at least 15 children between the ages of 3 and 18 are eligible for a package of quality tools, seeds, plants, and garden products.

The deadline for completed applications is Nov. 1, 2001. To apply, visit NGA's Web site at www.kids-gardening.com, or call 800-538-7476. The NGA also offers a newsletter, Growing Ideas: A Journal of Garden-Based Learning.

WEB WINNERS

Extreme Adventure
Learn about people and mountains with Nevada teacher Claudia

Berryman-Schafer and her team of climbers trekking up a Himalayan mountain. You'll find photos, links and answers to questions from students at www.nde.state.nv.us/chooyu/.

Learning Teachers
The 21st Century Teachers Network is a nonprofit organization that helps K-12 teachers learn and effectively integrate technology in the curriculum. It connects teachers with resources to assist them in creating teacher-driven professional development programs. www.21ct.org.

Black College Data
Finding information and resources

for the historically black colleges and universities in the United States comes easily at www.hbcu-central.com. Site includes an alumni, high school and current student registry, extensive HBCU listings and links as well as message boards.

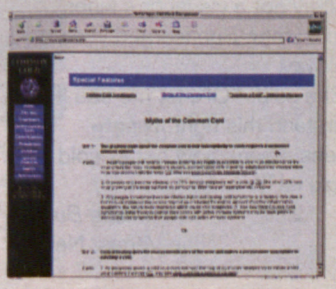
New to the Job?
New Teacher? Here's a Web site just for you. It includes a "Survival Kit for New Teachers" and lots of information for student and substitute teachers. The Texas-based outlet offers an electronic newsletter as well as a catalog. www.inspiringteachers.com.

Paint by Number
Lived long enough to remember the old paint by number kits? "Every

Man a Rembrandt" was the assertion. Stroll down memory lane on this site, or discover a curious 1950s phenomenon for the first time at www.americanhistory.si.edu/paint.

Your Magazine
Did the last issue of *NEA Today* not make it to your mailbox? Or did it get sucked into the black hole in your desk? No problem, look online. Maybe you want to submit a letter to the editor, place an ad or check the archives. You can do all those things online, too, at www.nea.org/neatoday/.

Treating the Cold
You can learn how to prevent, treat, or deal with the complications of the common cold. Nuke the bad stuff.



in the Light Lane

Doing the Math

One of my delights as an elementary school LD/BD resource teacher is collaboratively teaching with general educators.

During a third grade math class one bright girl told me, "$e^2 = y$." When I questioned her on how she figured that out, she explained, "e is the fifth letter of the alphabet, so e^2 is 25, and y is the 25th letter." That's thinking outside the box!

Kathy Froehlich
Florissant, Missouri

Several years ago, I was doing a unit on trigonometric functions with my Algebra I class. On the second day of the unit, in reviewing the meaning of the abbreviations used, I asked the class what "sin" was.

A student in the back of the room raised his hand and said, "Mr. Hesselton, I'm not sure what it is, but if you asked Jimmy Swaggart, he could probably tell you all about it!"

Robert Hesselton
Ganado, Arizona

One day when my pre-kindergarten students were busy with a readiness activity, it seemed like a good time to review their parents' first names.

Many of my little ones were still unable to give the first name of each parent in case of an emergency.

As we were going around the table, one of them said her mom's name was Jill. I said, "Wow, what a coincidence, that was what my mom was going to name me when I was born."

She replied, "Isn't it a good thing that she decided to name you Mrs. Sheehy instead."

Tamara Sheehy
Muskegon, Michigan

My second year of teaching, I was teaching my fourth graders 90 degree angles. I had the students stand up and turn around 360 degrees, 180 degrees, and then 90 degrees. They started by facing forward and then turning to the left (90 degrees).

After the students visually saw the examples on the white board and physically did the turns, one student showed me that she was definitely not a visual or a kinesthetic learner. She learned in a very literal way.

She said, "OK, let me see if I understand this right. Ninety degrees means how hot or cold a triangle is!"

Stephanie Bugash
Las Vegas, Nevada

"Ms. Evers, may I be excused? My computer has a bad virus."

As an elementary school counselor, I was talking to a five-year-old who was having difficulties in school.

I asked her, "If you could change one thing about school, what would it be?" She said, "Some people here don't know that I'm a princess!"

Rebecca Schmidt
Mayfield Heights, Ohio

Recently our high school faculty sponsored a sock hop for Relay for Life.

One of my students came up to me at the dance and said that she had recently used some of the acting skills she'd learned in my drama class. I told her how pleased I was … then she said, "Yep, I really wanted to come to the sock hop tonight, so I called my boss and convinced him I was too sick to go to work."

Janey Branson
Hutsonville, Illinois

My first year of teaching, over 25 years ago, was in an era when tie-dyed T-shirts were in great fashion.

My sixth grade class was completing a unit on Hawaii, and as a culminating art project, I thought it would be fun, as well as educational, to let the students design and make their own brightly colored "Hawaiian" shirts. I instructed them to go home and talk to their parents about bringing a white T-shirt for tie-dyeing.

The next morning I discovered that one of my students, a happy, wide-eyed 11-year-old, had not quite grasped the concept. He ran up to me before school started and bluntly informed me that his mother said she would have to know more about that sky-diving thing that we were planning.

Gail Clay
Aberdeen, North Carolina

This happened during testing for report cards. Phonics is still an integral part of our kindergarten program.

The children learn a key word for every consonant, for example, *a* is for apple, *b* is for ball, etc. If they can't remember the sound of a letter, they refer to the key word's initial sound. I asked Matthew to give the sound for the consonants and we were doing well until we got to the letter "*f*."

He just couldn't remember the sound, so I reminded him to use the key word: "Matt, remember the sound of Frog?" And sure enough he did … "ribbit."

In kindergarten, you just never know.

Patricia Sabold
Wyomissing Hills, Pennsylvania

When lecturing to my Westfield Middle School art students, leading toward a drawing reflecting American Indian art, I wrote the word "symmetry" on the board.

I asked my students for a definition of this. A young man raised his hand and offered, "I know what that means. That's where they bury dead people!"

Cathy Breitholtz
Algonquin, Illinois

Literally Speaking

While reviewing what we had learned about territorial expansion in the United States, one student volunteered that the United States had signed a treaty that set the northern border of the Oregon Territory at the 49th parallel. Noticing that one student was not quite paying attention, I said, "And Jacob, the U.S. signed that treaty with . . . . " Snapping back to reality, and not missing a beat, Jacob replied, "A pen?"

Holly Powell
Portland, Oregon

On the message board at the Web site for the National Science Teachers Association, students often post messages asking teachers to reply to their questions.

One middle school student complained that there were no classes on religion at her school. Another student replying to the message, advised, "Check with the teachers and administrators. If that doesn't work, check with your princeable."

I've never seen it spelled that way before—I think most princeables would like it!!

Pamela Galus
Omaha, Nebraska

I was having an informal reading discussion with my fourth graders. At one point, the boy sitting next to me and I simultaneously asked the same question of another student. We laughed, and he said, "Hey, Mrs. C., we think alike." He paused for a minute contemplating that concept and then said, "Scary thought!"

Cindy Cummings
Westminster, Maryland

Got Laughs?

- **Have a funny school story, anecdote, or vignette you'd like to share with other NEA members? You can send contributions to "In the Light Lane," NEA Today, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. Fax: 202/822-7206. Send E-mail to neatoday@nea.org.**
- **Want a classroom chuckle delivered to your E-mail box once a week? Subscribe to the new "In the Light Lane" mailing list. Just send an E-mail to join-lightlane@list.nea.org (no subject or message needed).**

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New Partnership for Older Women's Health

Women today can expect to live as much as one-third of their lives beyond menopause--the milestone that marks the end of their reproductive years. The changes that occur in a woman's body after menopause can increase the risk of getting some diseases, and other diseases just occur more often in older women. Learn more about menopause and other important women's health issues from the **Partnership for Post-Menopausal Women's Health.**

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The Education Technology Promotion Guide from the Software Publishers Association offers guidelines for publishing the success of your educational technology program. A CD-ROM includes letter and press release templates in both MAC and PC formats. To obtain a copy for your local Association, E-mail your name, address and the name of your local to Shelstar@aol.com.

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Web Sites

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Transaction Fee for Purchases	Transaction fee for the purchase of wire transfers, person-to-person money transfers, money orders, bets, lottery tickets, and casino gaming chips: 2% of each such purchase; $2 minimum, $30 maximum.
Transaction Fee for Cash Advances and Fees for Paying Late or Exceeding the Credit Limit	NEA Quantum: Transaction fee for Bank and ATM cash advances: None. Transaction fee for credit card cash advance checks and balance transfers: 2% of each cash advance ($2 minimum, $30 maximum). Over-the-credit-limit fee: None. Late payment fee: $25. NEA *Platinum Plus* and School Days: Transaction fee for Bank and ATM cash advances, credit card cash advance checks and balance transfers: 2% of each cash advance ($2 minimum, $30 maximum). Late Payment Fee: $25. Over-the-Credit-Limit Fee: $25.

†The current promotional Annual Percentage Rate (APR) offer for cash advance check and balance transfer transactions made with either the NEA Quantum, *Platinum Plus*, or School Days card account is 1.7% through your first six statement closing dates, commencing the month after your account is open. Thereafter, the non-promotional APR that will be applied to all new and outstanding cash advance balances consisting of cash advance check and balance transfer transactions will be 12.99% for the Quantum account, 13.99% for the *Platinum Plus* account or 16.99% for the School Days account. The non-promotional APR for your account is not guaranteed and is subject to change. **MBNA will allocate your payments to balances (including new transactions) with lower APRs before balances with higher APRs.** Balance transfers and/or cash advances of any kind may not be used to pay off or pay down any MBNA account. **Cash advances obtained through a Bank or ATM are not eligible for the promotional 1.7% APR offer.**

◊Quantum Assist (QA) is available only for the personal use of the Quantum Customer, his or her spouse, and dependents under 22 years of age. Requests for assistance may be submitted by phone or online, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, even when you are outside the U.S. While QA is a free service for Quantum Customers, you are responsible for the cost of any item or service acquired through QA. QA is provided by LesConcierges, Inc., a company that is not affiliated with MBNA. Significant terms and conditions apply. See the Guide to Coverage and the online Terms of Use for details.

Quantum Travel Services are provided by Palladian Travel Services, Inc., a subsidiary of MBNA America (Delaware), National Association. Palladian Travel Services, Inc., is a California Seller of Travel (Rev. No. 2041375-40), is registered with the State of Florida as a Seller of Travel (Reg. No. 30109) and is Registered Ohio Travel Agency (Reg. No. 87890234).

§Certain restrictions apply to these and other benefits as described in the materials sent soon after your account is opened. NEA *Platinum Plus* and School Days card benefits differ from those available with the NEA Quantum account, *e.g.*, Quantum Assist and Trip Cancellation/Interruption insurance are not available.

The NEA is not involved in the credit decision process; standard credit procedure is followed. All applications will be subject to a confidential standard review by MBNA America Bank, N.A.

Absolutely NO membership dues are used to market this program.

The NEA Credit Card Program® has been developed for NEA members and their families only. If a member decides not to renew membership, that person and his/her family will no longer be eligible to receive the preferred rates, fees and special promotions offered through the NEA Credit Card Program. If eligible, a replacement card will be offered. Any account opened in response to this offer will be governed by the laws of Delaware.

The information about the costs of the card described in this application was accurate as of 7/01. The information may have changed after that date. To find out what may have changed, please call (888) 758-7946. TTY users please call (800) 833-6262.

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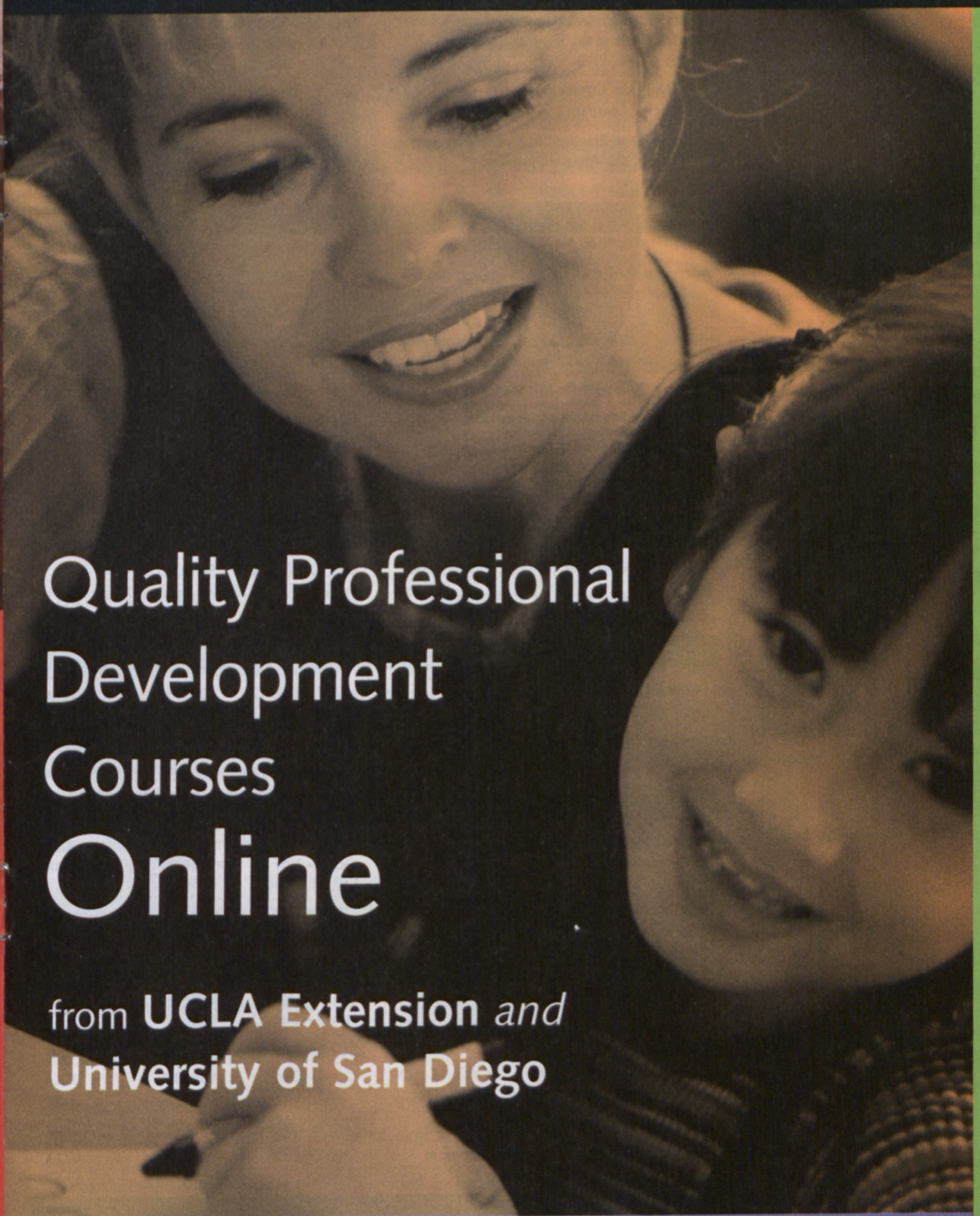
NEA's partner in online education for teachers



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A MESSAGE FROM YOUR NEA PRESIDENT

"As part of our ongoing mission to promote professional excellence in the education community, the National Education Association has chosen OnlineLearning.net as its partner in online education. From instructor-led courses in key areas of professional practice to self-paced courses in computer technology, OnlineLearning.net presents a convenient and rewarding way to develop and expand your skills.

Whether you are a classroom teacher seeking professional development courses or a staff member in need of updating your computer skills, take advantage of your NEA discount today and discover the many benefits of learning online."

– BOB CHASE, President
National Education Association

Take Professional Developm

COURSE NAME/UNITS	COURSE DATES	REGISTRATION #	SCHOOL
INCLUSION			
Mainstreaming: Teaching Individuals with Special Needs in the Regular Classroom *2 Semester Units*	Sept 28 – Nov 9 Oct 12 – Nov 23 Oct 24 – Dec 5	569H 0109 90Y 569H 0110 91Y 569H 0110 93Y	USD
Modifying the Curriculum for Exceptional Learners *2 Semester Units*	Nov 1 – Dec 10	501AN 0111 90Y	USD
Principles and Practices of Teaching Exceptional Learners in the Regular Classroom *3 Quarter Units*	Oct 2 – Nov 13 Oct 18 – Dec 6 Oct 24 – Dec 5	L9938Y L9949Y L9950Y	UCLA
READING			
NEW! **Intervention Strategies for Struggling Readers** *2 Semester Units*	Oct 22 – Dec 3	501AT 0110 90Y	USD
NEW! **Reading Across the Curriculum: Comprehension in the Content Areas** *2 Semester Units*	Oct 10 – Nov 21	501AV 0110 90Y	USD
Reading Strategies for K-2 Students *2 Semester Units*	Oct 4 – Nov 15	501AL 0110 90Y	USD
Phonics for Educators *2 Semester Units*	Oct 17 – Nov 28	501AM 0110 90Y	USD
Assessing and Working with a Beginning Reader at School or at Home *3 Quarter Units*	Oct 31 – Dec 5	L9955Y	UCLA
Reading for ESL *2 Quarter Units*	Oct 10 – Nov 14	L9581Y	UCLA
SUBJECT SPECIFIC			
California History for Teachers *2 Semester Units*	Oct 10 – Nov 21	501AS 0110 90Y	USD
Nutrition Fads, Facts, and Controversies *3 Quarter Units*	Sept 24 – Dec 3	L9244Y	UCLA
DIVERSITY			
Cultural Diversity in the Classroom *4 Quarter Units*	Nov 7 – Dec 12 Sept 26 – Oct 31	L9567Y L9565Y	UCLA
American Culture Through Music *2 Quarter Units*	Oct 18 – Nov 22	L9584Y	UCLA
American Culture *2 Quarter Units*	Oct 8 – Nov 12	L9582Y	UCLA
ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT			
Applied Methods in Teaching English *4.5 Quarter Units*	Sept 25 – Dec 11 Oct 3 – Nov 21 Oct 11 – Dec 6	L9561Y L9562Y L9563Y	UCLA
Methodologies for Teaching Academic Content in and Through English: Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) *4.5 Quarter Units*	Oct 2 – Dec 4 Oct 9 – Nov 27	L9572Y L9574Y	UCLA
Language Development and Acquisition *3 Quarter Units*	Sep 27 – Nov 1 Nov 8 – Dec 13	L9568Y L9569Y	UCLA
Language Structure and Usage *4 Quarter Units*	Oct 1 – Nov 5	L9570Y	UCLA
Teaching English Abroad: English as a Foreign Language *3 Quarter Units*	Oct 4 – Dec 6	L9573Y	UCLA
Teaching English to Children *2 Quarter Units*	Oct 16 – Nov 20	L9583Y	UCLA
Practicum: Observation and Instruction in the ESL Classroom *12 Quarter Units*	Sept 24 – Dec 3	L9559Y	UCLA
ADVANCED PLACEMENT			
Teaching AP English Literature and Composition: A How-To Course for Teachers *4.5 Quarter Units*	Sept 25 – Oct 30	L9630Y	UCLA
Teaching AP U.S. History: A How-To Course for Teachers *4.5 Quarter Units*	Sept 26 – Oct 31	L9631Y	UCLA
Teaching AP Art History: A How-To Course for Teachers *4.5 Quarter Units*	Sept 27 – Nov 1	L9633Y	UCLA

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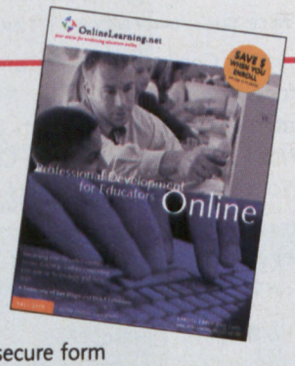
COURSE NAME/UNITS	COURSE DATES	REGISTRATION #	SCHOOL
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT + INSTRUCTION			
Classroom Management and Conflict Resolution *2 Semester Units*	Oct 9 – Nov 20	501AJ 0110 90Y	USD
Planning for Effective Instruction *2 Semester Units*	Oct 23 – Dec 4	502AK 0110 90Y	USD
Health Education: Health Care Perspectives for Teachers *2 Semester Units*	Sept 24 – Nov 5 Oct 29 – Dec 10	569I 0109 90Y 569I 0110 94Y	USD
INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY			
Technology Issues for Educational Leaders *3 Semester Units*	Oct 8 – Nov 19	501AP 0110 90Y	USD
Computers for Educators *2 Semester Units*	Sept 24 – Nov 5 Oct 15 – Nov 26	580A 0109 90Y 580A 0110 92Y	USD
Integrating Technology into the Language Arts Curriculum *2 Semester Units*	Sept 25 – Nov 6	565Q 0109 90Y	USD
Integrating Technology into the Math Curriculum *2 Semester Units*	Oct 9 – Nov 20	565R 0110 90Y	USD
Integrating Technology into the Science Curriculum *2 Semester Units*	Oct 11 – Nov 22	565S 0110 90Y	USD
Integrating Technology into the Social Studies Curriculum *2 Semester Units*	Oct 31 – Dec 12	565U 0110 90Y	USD
Integrating Technology into the K–12 Curriculum *3 Quarter Units*	Sept 25 – Oct 30	L9951Y	UCLA
Internet and Web Publishing for Educators *3 Quarter Units*	Nov 7 – Dec 12	L9992Y	UCLA
Advanced Microcomputers in the Classroom *3 Quarter Units*	Sept 26 – Oct 31 Oct 7 – Nov 11	L9989Y L9910Y	UCLA
HyperStudio *3 Quarter Units*	Oct 23 – Nov 27	L9953Y	UCLA
Strategies for the One-Computer Classroom *3 Quarter Units*	Oct 18 – Nov 29	M3008Y	UCLA
Microsoft Office for Teachers *2 Semester Units*	Oct 16 – Nov 27	501AU 0110 90Y	USD
UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO'S CERTIFICATE IN CHARACTER EDUCATION			
Character Education: A Comprehensive Framework and Introduction *2 Semester Units*	Oct 8 – Nov 19	500AO 0110 90Y	USD
Character Education: Curriculum and Teaching *2 Semester Units*	Oct 18 – Nov 29	501AO 0110 90Y	USD
NEW! **Character Education: Program Effectiveness, Best Practices and Resources** *2 Semester Units*	Nov 12 – Dec 21	502AO 0111 90Y	USD
UCLA EXTENSION'S COLLEGE COUNSELING CERTIFICATED PROGRAM			
Counseling the College-Bound Student *4 Quarter Units*	Sept 24 – Nov 26 Oct 1 – Dec 3	M3158Y M3160Y	UCLA
The College Admissions Process *4 Quarter Units*	Sept 25 – Nov 27 Oct 2 – Dec 4	M3166Y M3168Y	UCLA
Financial Aid Fundamentals *4 Quarter Units*	Oct 3 – Dec 5	M3172Y	UCLA
Using the Internet for College/Career Counseling *4 Quarter Units*	Sept 27 – Dec 6	M3177Y	UCLA
Testing/Career Assessment *4 Quarter Units*	Oct 3 – Dec 5	M3174Y	UCLA
Special Issues in College Counseling *4 Quarter Units*	Oct 16 – Dec 6	M3179Y	UCLA
Practicum in College Counseling *6 Quarter Units*	Oct 5 – Dec 14	M3181Y	UCLA
NEW! **The Independent College Counselor: Professional and Business Considerations** *2 Quarter Units*	Oct 25 – Nov 15	M3299Y	UCLA
NEW! **Leaving for College: Helping Families Cope with the Change** *1 Quarter Unit*	Oct 24 – Nov 7	M3324Y	UCLA

COURSE NAME/UNITS	COURSE DATES	REGISTRATION #	SCHOOL
UCLA EXTENSION'S ONLINE TEACHING PROGRAM			
Introduction to Online Technologies *4 Quarter Units*	Oct 2 – Nov 6 Oct 16 – Nov 20	L9618Y L9635Y	UCLA
Teaching and Learning Models for Online Courses *4 Quarter Units*	Oct 1 – Nov 19	L9619Y	UCLA
Developing Curriculum for Online Programs *4 Quarter Units*	Oct 11 – Nov 15	L9620Y	UCLA
Internet and Online Teaching Tools *4 Quarter Units*	Oct 24 – Nov 28	L9621Y	UCLA
Distance Learning Assessment Theory *4 Quarter Units*	Oct 15 – Nov 19	L9622Y	UCLA
JavaScript for Educators: An Introduction *4 Quarter Units*	Oct 9 – Nov 13	M3159Y	UCLA
Designing Online Programs *4 Quarter Units*	Nov 1 – Dec 6	L9623Y	UCLA
Creating and Using Multimedia Online *4 Quarter Units*	Oct 10 – Nov 14	L9624Y	UCLA
Re-Engineering Corporate Courseware for the Web *4 Quarter Units*	Oct 10 – Nov 14	L9626Y	UCLA
Legal Aspects of Information, Privacy, and Technology *4 Quarter Units*	Oct 15 – Dec 3	L9634Y	UCLA



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MS Internet Explorer 5 Concepts & Techniques
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Power Pack: Microsoft Office 2000

RETAIL PRICE: $495 POWER PACK PRICE: $199*

MS Word 2000 Comprehensive Concepts & Techniques
MS Excel 2000 Comprehensive Concepts & Techniques
MS PowerPoint 2000 Comprehensive Concepts & Techniques
MS Access 2000 Comprehensive Concepts & Techniques
MS Outlook 2000 Essential Concepts & Techniques

Power Pack: Microsoft Office 97

RETAIL PRICE: $396 POWER PACK PRICE: $179*

MS Word 97 Complete Concepts & Techniques
MS Excel 97 Complete Concepts & Techniques
MS PowerPoint 97 Complete Concepts & Techniques
MS Access 97 Complete Concepts & Techniques

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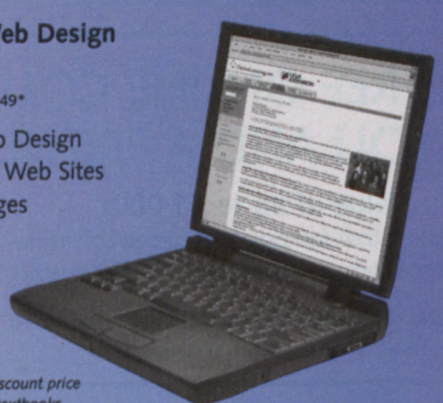
Principles of Web Design
Database Driven Web Sites
Active Server Pages
JavaScript



*Power Pack and NEA discount price does not include course textbooks.

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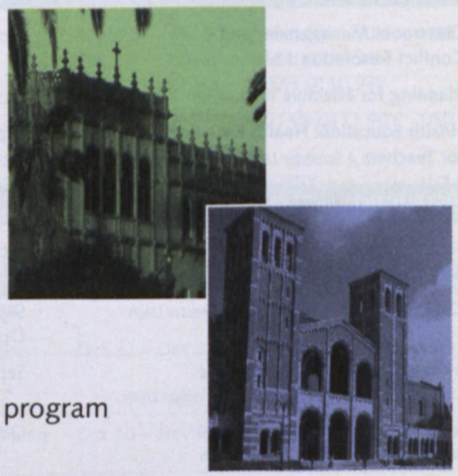

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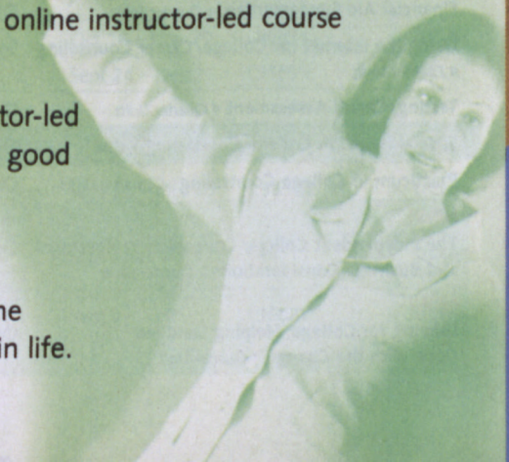
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